Reconstructing Gender Towards Collaboration

RECONSTRUCTING GENDER
TOWARDS COLLABORATION

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Foreword

Only on rare occasions did we step into the work and processes of the Gender Internship Programme (GIP), the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation (SDC) embarked upon between September 1996 and August 1998. But whenever there was this opportunity, we were deeply impressed by the commitment, professionalism and practical relevance with which the Interns and a Core Group in GIP were involved in an innovative training – and change programme. GIP was exploring and experimenting with a deeper, humanistic meaning of gender. It was also experimenting with changing entrenched positions and roles of men and women towards a more equitable, mutually beneficial and respectful collaboration between women and men in organisations. It was on the occasion of these short moments of being with a group of 16 committed learners that we sometimes felt that we would like to be with the group during the whole of their journey.

SDC would like to thank the members of the Core Group, Uma Ramaswamy, Bhanumathy Vasudevan, Gagan Sethi, Dev Basnyet, Anuradha Prasad and the Coordinator of the programme Sulagna Sengupta for their engagement which went far beyond of what can normally be expected from a consultancy – or employment arrangement.

But we would also like to thank Uma Acharya, Anita Sharma,

Omana T.K., K. Joy, Raveendra Hedge, Geeta Kumari, Shankar Naik, Siddu Pujari, Vijay Kumar, Maya Prabhu and Yugandhar Mandavkar and their organisations working in the field of natural resource management for their openness and all that they have given to the GIP programme.

'To break through, change must begin in the internal self of the individual and find its translation in relationships in the family, community and work universe. ...The wider universe cannot be transformed by an organisation which refuses to look within itself'. This statement can be found in this book. It has in our understanding been the credo of the Gender Internship Programme. While translating this credo into effective learning processes, GIP has also been experimenting with various new training strategies and methodologies. It is this understanding of gender and gender training that SDC would now like to take as a new starting point when defining platforms with its partners in India for the promotion of greater gender equity.

The book in your hands builds on much more than the GIP programme we were referring to here above. It is the gist of many years of work experience of the Core Group members, of their multi-disciplinary backgrounds as well as of SDC's 'journey' in promoting women and gender in its development programme in India. SDC hopes that this book, the rich documentation material on the GIP pilot programme, but first of all Core Group members, Interns and readers will continue to contribute towards the design and implementation of strategic gender training programmes and interventions we hope to support in the future.

Berne and New Delhi

March 1999

Hansruedi Pfeiffer
Head of the SDC HID Sphere,
1994-1998

Dr. Urs Heierli
Co-ordinator of the SDC
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Preface

The post-Independent India has witnessed far reaching changes in the lives of women, thanks largely to the many initiatives of the central and state governments, non-governmental organisations, autonomous women's groups and above all to the grassroots awakening. After half a century, it is time for stock taking and question what these initiatives have accomplished? Women's development invariably leads one to ask questions about gender and its manifestations in society. Women do not live in a world that is exclusively theirs. It is pertinent to ask how transformations in women's lives have altered the relationship between women and men? Beyond a point women's lives cannot alter unless men's lives alter too. In other words, there is a separate space and a shared space in gender relationships. While acknowledging the significance of separate space, one needs to see if changes are occurring in shared space as well. The universe of shared space compels one to recognise the criticality of having to go beyond women's emancipation to nurture arenas of collaborative relationships that are conducive to develop the full potential of both women and men. What this requires is not mere separate development of women but the pursuit of shared perspectives and just arrangements. For this many things have to happen.

As individuals, women and men can bring transformations by gaining deeper understanding of their gendered selves. Jung put this idea most powerfully,

In the last analysis, the essential thing is the life of the individual. This alone makes history, here alone do the great transformations take place, and the whole history of the world ultimately springs to a giant summation from these hidden sources in individuals. In our most private and subjective lives, we are not only the passive witnesses to our age, but also its makers.[1]

For long, organisations and societal institutions have nurtured traditional gender cultures which are no longer in tune with changing times.

Every organisation is typified by its gender weave. To keep up with times, organisations-modern or traditional have to put on new lenses to bring about shifts that moves away from obsolete gender traditions.

We have come together to address the many facets of the shared space in gender. Our background in social science research, behavioural science, training and grassroots activism have encouraged us to advance a multi-disciplinary perspective that looks at gender realities with multiple lenses. This cross-fertilisation, so essential in understanding gender strengthened our personal insights even as it enriched our collective effort. No one of us could have grasped this multifaceted reality without weaving together the influence of our plural traditions – intellectual and practical. We have tried to combine a medley of methodology and concept – viewing gender at the level of the individual, organisation and societal institutions. Beyond a certain threshold, gender has to be seen in holistic and not a fragmented way.

The thrust of this book is to take the gender debate forward to include a wider spectrum of issues in the field of gender and development. Planners and practitioners are keen on the know-how of integrating gender in their interventions. Many tool kits have been brought out on best practices in gender. In this book we have kept away from giving specific tools and techniques. Our

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[1] Jung, C.G., *Collected Works*, 45 : 315.

belief is that a large part of gender falls in the area of values and orientation. It is only a humanistic approach that can reveal the connections between subjective perceptions of reality with the objective social world. Therefore, a great deal of work in gender interventions lies in the field of analysing and understanding inner processes within individuals, organisations and societal institutions. With a good conceptual background, effective methodologies can evolve out of specific contexts.

This book is for development practitioners, trainers, planners, personnel of grassroots organisations and development co-operation, experts, students and all those interested in advancing their understanding of gender.

Although this book grew out of several of our individual and collective efforts, it was the Gender Internship Programme (GIP), sponsored by Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation (SDC) which triggered us into writing this book. Since the early nineties, SDC, India has not only provided requisite platforms to address issues of gender in their partnership programme but created scope for experimentation and innovation. What started as a trickle with review studies in early nineties picked up momentum, resulting in a programmatic intervention through the GIP in 1997-98. The participating organisations, gender interns, and resource persons of the GIP brought together an amalgam of perspectives and created platforms for experimentation. The GIP was concluded with a formative evaluation which gave direction for taking gender forward. We have concluded this book with an excerpt from the evaluation.

Our perspectives in gender bear the imprint of several influences. The gender interns and their parent organisations provided us with learning sites for evolving and consolidating our ideas. We place on record our appreciation for their close involvement in our endeavour and also for taking their gender agenda forward in their organisations. Resource persons who were associated with the GIP contributed to the enrichment of concept and methodology. In particular, we would like to thank Sushma

Iyengar who provided critical inputs as a resource person in the GIP and later as member of formative evaluation team along with Felix Bachmann. Our special thanks to Felix Bachmann. Their critical evaluation of the GIP has contributed to planning activities in taking gender forward in SDC. Our thanks are to Ranjini Krishnamurti, Uday Shankar, Sivaprasad, and Suryaprakasam for their resource support and co-operation. Several individuals took time to read the earlier drafts of the book and gave valuable comments. We would like to thank all of them.

Our special thanks and appreciation to Hans Ruedi Pfeiffer for his empathetic support as the Head of HID Sphere in SDC. Our appreciation to Urs Heierli, Coordinator of SDC in India and Laurent Guye, former Coordinator of SDC for nurturing gender initiatives within SDC. Among the many who created platforms for gender initiatives, we would like to thank Martin Sommer (SDC) and Herman Mulder (IC). Finally, we would like to thank all the staff of SDC for their support and co-operation.

Finally, we place on record our acknowledgement of the contribution made by the GIP interns, their parent organisations and many other organisations with whom we have collaborated. Our special thanks to all of them.

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Separate and Collaborative Space for Women and Men

PRE-INDEPENDENT INDIA

The recognition that Indian women are disprivileged, discriminated and in need of emancipation from many social evils has a long history. Leading social reformers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century attempted to eradicate degrading social practices such as dowry, sati, and ban on widow remarriage. Eminent leaders of the Brahmo and Arya Samaj movements are to this day remembered for their pioneering effort to reform society.

Improving women's status was also a major concern of the nationalist movement. National leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Subash Chandra Bose did much to support the cause of social reform and draw women into the forefront of national politics. Some of the outstanding women leaders of this country - as for example, Sarojini Naidu and Durgabai Deshmukh are the product of this era. While individual women rose to national prominence, the problems of women as a whole began to be addressed only after Independence. Pre-Independent women leaders were largely role models, pointing to the potential women had.

The disadvantaged position of the large majority of women came to be formally acknowledged only after Independence. In 1952, the Backward Classes Commission headed by Kaka Kalelkar declared the women of India – half of India's population – as backward. This observation was thought at that time to be a vast

exaggeration. It was also thought to make the task of identifying backward classes for special protection more complex and unworkable. On hindsight, it is now clear that the Commission truthfully summed up the status of Indian women.

Many changes have taken place during the five decades since Independence. Women have learnt new skills, entered new fields of employment, gained better education, and improved their knowledge-base. They have also organised themselves into collectives that cut across social divisions such as caste, community and region. In more general terms, women have become more self-aware and assertive. The spark for these developments has come largely from grassroots initiatives, non-government organisations, autonomous women's movements and to a certain extent from the developmental efforts of the government. This has enabled women to share their experience and create a pool of knowledge which remained invisible. This newly discovered knowledge about women's lives – skills, needs, interests, concerns, disabilities and adversities – has become the base upon which to build activities that actually change their position in society. To fully comprehend this change, one must look at the conceptual thinking underlying the process of development.

POST-INDEPENDENCE

Confining Women to the Domestic Context

Economic growth was the preoccupation of planners in the early years of the country's independence. Women were thought to have an important role in development, but within the context of the family and household. Child bearing, motherhood, health, education and family planning gained visibility as areas in which they could contribute to developmental effort. The Community Development Programme (CDP), launched in 1952 to improve agriculture and transform village society provided for the appointment of two women gram sevikas (village level workers) under a mukhya sevika (lady social education organiser) in each block. Women were organised in mahila mandals (women's groups)

which mushroomed across the country. By 1954, the Central Social Welfare Board had been set up to provide social services to women. The government also focused on such stark issues as destitution, the problems of widows etc. While these initiatives were necessary and well-meant, the focus of development planners was limited to the domestic sphere. There was a certain comfort in this approach since it meshed well with tradition and reinforced the traditional social order.

In the view of the planners, the role of women lay in reproduction rather than production. They overlooked the contribution of women to the economy of the household and village. Additionally, the household was treated as an undifferentiated unit, with the man – its 'natural' head – becoming the focus of developmental intervention. The presence within the household of different categories of individuals with diverse interests was not recognised. The mahila mandals did signal a change by bringing women out of their homes, but only in their familiar role as home-makers.

Capacitating Women in Their Productive Roles

The government set up a Commission in 1974 to study the status of women. A landmark in the history of women's development, the Commission's report titled 'Towards Equality' created a large database and brought to the surface the many disadvantages women suffered. The findings of the 32nd round of the National Sample Survey (1977-78) pointed to the presence of large numbers of women in a variety of activities and occupations. Following this discovery, the 1981 Census came up with a new employment category called 'marginal workers' (persons working less than 183 days per year in a given activity). The publication of two reports on women – Shramshakti (1988) and National Perspective Plan for Women (1988) – which assembled considerable data on the work and life styles of labouring women firmly established the fact that women's work remained invisible in spite of their contribution to economic activity because much of this was in the informal sector. The movement to impute value to women's home based work and give them an identity and thus

pave the way for appropriate legislation and welfare measures gained legitimacy.

The seventies and eighties were a period of significant change in the way society perceived women's contribution to the economy. Their role as producers gained for the first time, visibility and recognition. Research on women's labour destroyed the many myths about their productive roles. With the 1991 Census it became clear that the informal sector made up the larger chunk of the economy, and women were its prime movers. A mere 4.2 per cent of the working women were employed in the organised industry. Even this small segment has been under threat. There has been a huge drop in their numbers in certain traditional industries such as textiles, coal and jute which used to be major employers of women. While women have lost out in their traditional strongholds, they have failed to gain a foothold in modern industries. The exception to this is the service sector, especially in transportation, communications, financial services and in more recent times, information technology. Even in this sector with the exception of information technology, it is the jobs at the lower end of the spectrum, where skills are low and levels of pay relatively poor which are available to women. Women who have lost their jobs in organised industry have been turning to the unorganised sector for a livelihood. They are to be found in all kinds of self-employment, as for example street vending, home-based production and similar other work. For example, many women who have been displaced from the Bombay textile industry in the eighties have turned to the informal sector. Looked at in another way, 95.8% of the working women of the country are in the informal sector. They have a notable presence in every part of this sector, whether it be forestry, fishery, home based production, construction, sericulture or agriculture. With such a dominant presence, it was no longer possible to argue that their place was within the home. Developmental initiatives came under pressure to recognise their contribution and address their concerns.

The seventies also witnessed the emergence of a vibrant

autonomous women's organisations, espousing various strands of feminist ideology. Students, intellectuals, professionals, grassroots activists joined these organisations to crusade against the pervasive power of patriarchal institutions. By the eighties, grass roots organisations followed on the heels of autonomous women's organisations furthering the debate on the criticality of women's development and emancipation. Since the eighties, rural India has experienced exponential growth of grassroots women's collectives – mahila samitis, self-help groups, savings and credit groups, women's co-operatives, water and forest users groups and federal bodies of these grassroots initiatives.

Both the autonomous women's organisations and grassroots initiatives also drew their strength and support from the wider debates and events in international fora. The various UN conventions, in particular, the first, second and third World Conferences on Women in Mexico (1975), Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985) brought in their wake funds for research on women, voluntary commitments by the national governments to advance the cause of women's development.[1] Subsequently, the Fourth World Women's Conference on Women in Beijing (1995) gave a bold thrust for the empowerment of women.[2]

With all this, abundant data surfaced on women's contribution to the economy. Researchers, NGO interventions and grassroots initiatives pointed to the variety of economic roles they played. The more startling revelation was that one third of the rural households are headed by women and therefore dependent on their capacity to earn a living. The large scale migration of men from the countryside in search of employment has cast a huge

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[1] The first United Nations development fund for women was introduced in 1976 which got renamed into UNIFEM and established as an open-ended UN development programme. Again, on the recommendation of the First World Conference on women, the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) was founded in 1976.

[2] The Beijing conference voluntarily committed 189 participating governments for the inclusion of gender in all their policies and programmes. The Beijing Conference gave vital thrust to an agenda for women's empowerment.

burden on women. The women's skill, knowledge and the capacity to work are often the only resource available to poor households. To survive the challenge of poverty and to earn a living under harsh conditions, women have to use their ingenuity and entrepreneurial ability. For most poor women, procuring the basics of existence such as water and firewood is itself a daily ordeal. Their earning power is without doubt critical for the survival of the family. Improving their participation in productive work has, therefore came to be viewed as critical for poverty alleviation. There was also a growing recognition that women spent most of their earning on the upkeep of the family. An outcome of these findings was the inclusion of women in the poverty alleviation programmes of the government. The increasing evidence on women's economic roles and their contribution to the national economy furthered the argument that economic development was critical to women's progress. Multilateral and bilateral organisations, in particular the World Bank and USAID, went along with this reasoning and further reinforced the need to target women for poverty alleviation. The argument was that with an increase in productivity and earning power, women would gain better education, better health and greater control over their own lives. The government responded to these arguments by allocating quotas to women in Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) etc., and designing poverty alleviation programmes (as for e.g. DWACRA) aimed exclusively at women and children.

Accessing Resources

The thrust of these programmes was on access to resources. The fact was that women could not improve their life chances because they lacked access to assets, institutional credit, skill, information and knowledge. The World Bank report on Gender and Poverty (1991) emphasised the criticality of access to resources. The majority of government schemes for women underscore this argument. To quote, '....Efforts to improve the position of women must focus on women as economic actors

...women are more vulnerable than men to the extremes of poverty and its consequences ... The labour force participation of women and their proportional contribution to total family income are the highest in households with the lowest economic status. Even where there is a male earner, women's earnings form a major part of the income of poor households ... compared with men, women contribute a larger share of what they earn to basic family maintenance ... Policymakers ... fail to recognise, and hence to harness, the strategic potential of women as critical actors in the process of moving their families out of poverty ... Measures to enhance women's access to productive resources are critical as direct and self-targetting means to reduce poverty ... women are central to the success of poverty alleviation efforts in the short and long term ... market forces have great potential to influence gender ideology and increase the perceived value of women. *The question of access is fundamental to the social construction of gender.*[3] With such powerful thrust to the concept of access to resources by the World Bank and other multilateral and bilateral programmes, developmental initiatives began to be fashioned after this concept. Successful grassroots initiatives such as SEWA and Grameen Bank validated this strategy. There was a proliferation of women's savings and credit groups across the country in the years that followed. Savings and credit became a central feature of almost every scheme aimed at women. Self-employment, especially in tiny enterprises producing food stuffs, raising nurseries, poultry-keeping, tailoring and the like was the dominant economic activity into which credit was channelled. These were activities in which women were in any case engaged, although perhaps not as independent producers. There was no shift therefore, in what women did, or what they were thought to be competent to do. Moreover, these were activities at the margins of existence. They provided subsistence, but did not yield a sizeable surplus. The social identity of women remained much the same as before.

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[3] World Bank, 1992, *Women, Poverty in India*, The World Bank: Washington, pp.4-5 & 59-60.

The effort to improve women's life situation has, taken two broad directions. One is to bring improvements in their everyday needs, as for example access to drinking water, fodder and fuel. A major focus of many developmental initiatives relates to these immediate concerns of women in rural India. Clearly, the thrust of these interventions is to alleviate problems within the existing social context rather than to challenge or question that context.

The second approach is more unconventional. It seeks to give greater power to women through control over economic resources. Typical of this approach is to give them loans to buy cattle, right to collect and sell minor forest produce, and titles to assets such as land and houses. The ownership of assets does many things to women. It increases their confidence and self-worth. It opens up to them occupations that generate more value. More fundamentally, it improves their status by altering the power structure of society and reducing their subordination. However, it has not been easy to give property rights to women.

What is even more difficult is to alter the sexual division of labour. Deeply entrenched attitudes about what is properly men's and women's work have proved to be extremely resistant to change. The developmental schemes of the government have done little to deviate from time-hallowed traditions. The schemes of Central Social Welfare Board, the KVIC, for example, provide classic examples of how the conventional division of labour between men and women continue to hold sway. When it comes to women, spinning Charkha, tailoring, craft work, are treated as women's domain. Most of the poverty alleviation schemes are cast in the mould of tradition.

Creating Separate Space for Women

Since the seventies, women's organisations have been pushing for change in two major directions. The first is for fundamental change in the material conditions of women through income-generation, asset-formation and ownership of property. The second which goes beyond economics seeks to alter certain socio-

political aspects of society, in particular the patriarchal fabric. Much of the radical thinking in this arena has come from several strands of feminist movement in the country. There are many variants of feminism subscribing to different ideologies, although their respective positions do not appear to have crystallised yet on various issues.[4] However, these groups have cohered over several issues in spite of their divergent ideologies.

Since the last four decades, diverse women's organisations have catalysed development interventions. *One strand of women's organisations prefers to work from within larger organisations, such as trade unions, peasant organisations, civil rights movement and political parties.* Several trade union federations have promoted women's wings, and a few have even extended their interest beyond organised industry to cover the unorganised sector. The political parties for their part have also reorganised their women's wings (for example, Mahila Morcha of BJP and Mahila Congress of the Congress Party). A few left parties have even promoted mass based women's organisations such as the All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA), All India Co-odrdination Committee (ACCWW) and Janwadi Mahila Sabha (JMS). The struggle of women's segments in these wider organisations is to not only create meaningful space for women's issues but integrating them within the larger organisational perspectives. Their achievements would eventually be determined not just by the efforts of women themselves but by the freedom and flexibility which the larger movement permits them.[5]

The second strand of women's organisations made a powerful argument out of creating exclusive space for women where they could develop without the burden of tradition. The emergence of autonomous women's movements during this period gave powerful boost to this organisational principle. Their argument that political parties, trade unions and other wider movements in their preoccupation

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[4] Omvedt, Gali, 1986 ,'Women's Movement : Some Ideological Debates', *Lokayan Bulletin*, 4:6

[5] Sen, Ilina, 1990, *A Space Within Struggle*, New Delhi: Kali for Women.

with caste, class and other wider issues neglected women's issues was powerful in its appeal and logic. Soon, the grassroots initiatives, development interventions adapted the theme of creating separate spaces to develop and empower women. The argument was that to build their confidence levels, develop skills and emerge as solidarity groups, women had to be given the opportunity to be with themselves. Women and men did not have similar starting points in life. The methodology for organising such exclusive groups was further strengthened by several successful grassroots initiatives. Exclusive groups which helped women to come out of their domestic environment and discuss common problems, voice demands, search for solutions, gain skills and actively pursue development initiatives became a major force. Among the organisations formed along these lines are numerous savings and credit groups, mahila sanghams, self-help groups, women's co-operatives and many other forms of self-help organisations. *The outcome of this trend for women's emancipation has been far reaching.*

The efforts of women to come together in self-help organisations have consequences, which go well beyond the social and economic benefits visible on the surface. The process of coming together is itself the first step in transformation. Women come together to gain access to credit, productive resources and to conduct their business. They have also used their collective strength in several quarters to agitate against alcoholism, sexual violence and press for favourable legislation and social policy. Self-help initiatives have a long list of impressive achievements to their credit. First and foremost, ordinary women from a background of poverty have learnt to come out of the confines of their homes. Many who have never stepped out of their home have discovered their own leadership potential and moved out into a world beyond their cloistered existence. Sharing experiences with their counterparts from other parts of the country has opened up new vistas of understanding. A major objective of these self-help initiatives has been to develop the

decision making ability of ordinary folk. Bringing together women from poor families, teaching them to co-operate with each other, helping them to understand democratic decision making, and sustaining these collectives has been a challenging task. Yet, much of women's development has occurred within a typical framework. While the development initiatives have undoubtedly given some security and brought about definite improvements in earnings and living standards of women in rural India, they have also reinforced tradition by confining women to low-skill, low-end occupations where they always had a presence.

Increasing Women's Participation in Decision Making

Development focus to the economic roles and needs of women led to an examination of their involvement in participation and decision making – in other words, economic betterment opened up the *political question of power and influence.* All development initiatives involve decision making. *The question is not merely who will benefit from development but who will decide, and how?* Whether it is watershed or livestock development, forestry, co-operatives or whatever, there are important decisions to be taken. Women have conventionally been kept out of this decision making, often on the ground that they did not know enough to participate. Once women got into economic activities, the demand for inclusion in decision making began to gain ground.

The grassroots initiatives of women in the eighties signalled the gradual entry of women in decision making fora. Their experiences revealed that economic empowerment alone does not bring about women's empowerment. Women lacked power and, therefore, need to enter decision making processes. Women needed to be educated on their rights.

By the middle of eighties, a few State development programmes in collaboration with ngos were initiated to give women more access to power. Of these, the Women's Development Programme (Rajasthan) and Mahila Samakhya

Programme in a few states (Karnataka, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh) were two pioneering efforts to increase women's knowledge base and political participation in the development process. It is now common to find women represented at decision making levels in watershed committees, joint forest management bodies, co-operatives etc. Another development has been the reservation for women in local government (Panchayat Raj Institutions) bodies. Gaining representation in these bodies is the first step in getting heard. What is more important is to actively participate in decisions and place women's issues in the wider context of social development. This has been more difficult to achieve. **(See, Chart 1: Changing Course of Women's Development.)**

However, a review of the nature of women's participation in development projects reveals typical patterns. Let us look at what happens in water or forest users committees where women have been given representation. Women here are found participating and raising what are commonly known as 'women's issues'– raising nurseries, nala cleaning, bunding or small technologies (drinking water, smokeless chulah etc.) Men, on the other raise issues related to ground water resources, new technologies, cropping patterns, fertilisers, etc. The neat division of activities in development projects have compartmentalised women and men into neat boxes, as if they live in separate worlds. Drinking water is as much a concern of men as of women. As members of farming households, women have a say on crops, use of fertilisers, purchase of farm machinery etc.

SEGMENTED DEVELOPMENT

Overall, women's development in India has followed the path of affirmative action. The government's response to the need for women's development has been to look for ways in which special benefits can be targeted at them. Separate schemes for women, women's cells, priority entitlements, special quotas on committees, separate institutions (Women Study Centres, Centres for Women's Studies in Universities, etc.), special training schemes

Chart1

CHANGING COURSE OF WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT

Thrusts	Pre-Independence
	(late 19th century and early 20th century)

⊕ Addressing Social Evils and Involving Women in National Movement

❖ Movements of social reform – Brahmo and Arya Samaj to eradicate degrading social practices related to women.

⊕ Humane Response

❖ Nationalist movement drew women into the forefront of nationalist politics

⬇   ⬇   ⬇   ⬇

Post Independence
1950s / 60s

⊕ Confining Women's Role to Domestic Context / Focus on Reproductive Role.

❖ Community Development Programme CDP, 1952, 2 grama sevikas and one mukhya sevika for each block).

❖ Organising mahila mandals across the country.

❖ Setting up Central Social Welfare Board (1954) – Welfare focus on Women

⬇   ⬇   ⬇   ⬇

1970s

⊕ Creating Database and Visibiulisation of Women's Role in the Economy

❖ Research on women's labour revealing large presence of women in the informal sector.

⊕ Growth of Autonomous Women's Movement

❖ Emergence of a broad-based autonomous women's movement.

❖ Commission set up to study the status of women (1974)

❖ National Sample Survey, 32nd round (1977-78) revealed a large number of women in variety of activities and occupations.

❖ Following this, 1981 Census came up with the category 'marginal' workers.

❖ In 1975, the first World Conference on Women was held in Mexico. The United Nations visibilised the situation

of women the world over and declared 1975 as the International Women's Year.

❖ 1977 – May 8th is declared as Women's Day

❖ Setting up of separate cells, departments for women development.

1980s

⊕ Continued Thrust on Women's Economic Role.

⊕ Incubated the Concept of Women's Empowerment

⊕ Few shifts in policy.

❖ The Second World Conference on women in Copenhagen (1980) and the Third World Conference in 1985 resulted in voluntary commitments by national governments for the advancement of women.

❖ Upsurge of grassroots initiatives and taking the agenda of women's development forward.

❖ Multilateral and bilateral organisations (World Bank, USAID) targetted women for poverty alleviation.

❖ Emergence of SHGs. Recognition of creditworthiness of women

❖ Government designed poverty alleviation programmes focussing on women (eg. DWACRA, created quotas to women in IRDP, JRY, etc.)

❖ Introduction of state initiated programmes in collaboration with ngos to bring awareness and educate women on their rights (WDP in Rajasthan and Mahila Samakhya program in Karnataka, Gujarat, UP, etc.,)

1990s

⊕ Focus on Women as a Vital Economic Force

⊕ Thrust on Greater Access to Resources

❖ Gradual Shifts in Policies.

❖ World Bank Report on Gender and Poverty in India, 1991.

❖ The UN Human Rights Conference in

✤ Taking the Agenda of Women's Empowerment Forward

✤ Thrust on Giving access to Resources for Women's Empowerment

✤ Greater Thrust on Empowerment of Women in Political Bodies

✤ A Few Shifts from Women's Development to Gender

Vienna (1993) declared elimination of violence against women.

❖ The World Summit in 1995 called upon national governments to give priority to the needs and rights of women and children

❖ The Fourth Conference of Women in Beijing (1994) has adopted the agenda for women's empowerment. The thrust is on active participation in all spheres of public and private life through a full and equal share in economic social, cultural and political decision making.

❖ Visibilisation of the large constituency of women's work as home-based and self-employed (Shramshakthi [1988] and National Perspective Plan for Women [NIPCCD, 1988]).

❖ Proliferation of SHGs, managed largely by women. Impressive base of savings and credit.

❖ Setting up of National Women's Commission in 1991.

❖ Growth of regional networks of women's groups.

❖ Continuation of national conferences of AWGs.

❖ Credit and savings gained centrality in development interventions

❖ Self-employment in tiny (largely traditional) enterprises got linked to credit groups.

❖ Increased attempts to include women in decision-making fora – Watershed projects, livestock development, forestry, co-operatives, etc.

❖ Reservation (33.3%) for women in local government bodies (Panchayat Raj).

Note: Elements of each stage has been carried forward into the other. The thrust of each decade has been different but built on the previous experiences and their focus.

and the setting of the Department of Women and Child Development and the Women's Commission illustrate this trend. Women have been appointed to many of these bodies to give expert advise. A consequence – perhaps not intended – of this approach to women's development has been to compartmentalise women and women's issues and isolate them from mainstream developmental issues. *With this has come a certain aloofness and hostility among men to women's issues. Another response is politically correct behaviour – of supporting women's cause superficially without any involvement or conviction.* The problems of women are those of society and not just of women. It is in society's interest to solve them. This cannot happen through isolated development or politically correct behaviour. Women's issues are linked with wider social issues and have to be seen together with them.

The sexual division of labour is a product of culture. In every society there are deep rooted ideas about what may be termed as men's culture which is different from women's culture. These cultures have in turn laid down customs as to what is properly men's or women's work. Even the most modern societies have not escaped from these deeply ingrained gender values. For example, almost every industry believes that women are docile, gentle, caring and good at work which requires skilful and supple fingers. In electronics, it is quite common to find women doing the most routine and boring assembly jobs. Similarly, in the service industry women are employed as secretaries, stenographers, receptionists, book keepers, hostesses and so on. These are not jobs which involve higher level of planning and decision making. They are also dead-end jobs with few opportunities for promotion to higher levels. Ideas about what is suitable for women and men are drawn from society. Women's labour is expected to centre around house work and motherhood. Men are expected to support the family, and women are considered secondary wage earners who can be paid less. These beliefs, shared by large number organisations – modern or traditional, government or non-government lie behind the argument that a career is less

important to women. (See Chapter 2.)

There can be no fundamental improvement in women's status unless rigid, culturally prescribed divisions become more flexible. On the other hand, deeply rooted values in which individuals are socialised by powerful social institutions such as the family and the community are difficult to change, especially in the short run. Moreover, social values cannot be changed just by addressing economic issues. Thus, people's ideas about women's work and women's roles may remain in tact even after women have gained property rights. For women's identity to change one must address the socially constructed images men and women have of each other.

Diagram 1

Women's Development : Segmentation

Five Decades of Women's Development

  ◆ Focussing on Women in Domestic Context

  ◆ Capacitating Women in their Productive Roles

  ◆ Promoting Access to and Control of Resources

  ◆ Creating Separate Space for Women

  ◆ Increasing Women's Participation in Decision Making

 ◆ **Economic Development of Women**

 ◆ **Segmented Development**

Chapter 2

What is Gender?

GENDER : A SOCIAL CONSTRUCT

Men and women are different biologically. They play different roles in reproducing the human species. Building on this biological difference, every culture has evolved roles, traits and forms of behaviour which are thought to be typical of men and women. Some forms of behaviour are thought to be feminine, and others masculine. Similarly, some tasks are considered suitable for men and others for women. These roles and traits are not necessarily handed down to men and women by their biology. Quite a lot of it is the creation of society. Gender is part biology and part social construction. Men and women are therefore playing out two sets of realities. One is their biology, the way they are born, whether as man or woman. The other is the baggage given to them by society – what society thinks they ought to be as men or women. For example, the fact of bearing children sets women biologically apart from men. Culture has used this biological fact to assign primacy to the women's role as mother and wife and by extension her other roles in the domestic sphere. Gender relations selectively highlight the biological differences between men and women while brushing aside the similarities under the carpet. This is what makes possible the attribution of vastly different qualities, roles and capacities to men and women by society. Again, society does not merely treat men and women differently. It also ranks them and their work as having more or less value.

These images of men and women – what they are and what they should be – are deeply rooted in the minds of individuals

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and the collectivity that we call society. Even young children – boys and girls – carry these ideas. It is an unconscious programming of the mind that everyone goes through. Thus, men feel strong and powerful just because they are men. And women feel vulnerable for exactly the same reason. This programming takes many routes. One of the most powerful is the way boys and girls are brought up in the family. Symbols, myths, legends, language, proverbs, folklore and rituals are other powerful agents that condition our minds. Finally, the routine performance of different tasks itself results in men and women developing different personal qualities. Although men and women have many similarities, the social construction of gender has over emphasised the differences.

Positioning Men and Women

Gender positions men and women. They enact many roles in their daily lives – as father, mother, husband, wife, brother, sister, colleague, employer, employee and so on. These roles are enacted in the context of an institution – whether family, community or place of work. Because human beings are playing these roles in every institutional context, gender is always alive. In an institution like the family, gender has a primary role. It is therefore more open, clear and direct. In the wider society, gender works along with other principles of social organisation such as caste, class, tribe and ethnicity which are major forms of inequality. This combination of inequalities influences differently the access of men and women to resources – skill, knowledge, power and economic assets. For some it can mean an improvement in life chances, whereas for others life can become harder. Men, by and large, stand to gain, but this does not mean that all men will have greater access to resources. An upper caste man may find his power and privilege increased in the wider society because he is both a man and a dominant caste person, but a scheduled caste man may not gain better access. For a scheduled caste woman the loss would be even greater. While she is only a woman inside the family, she is both a woman and a scheduled caste person in the village panchayat.

The performance of social roles in combination with the inequalities of the wider society has resulted in women and men having unequal control over resources. As wives and mothers, women have acquired the ability to care and nurture. In agriculture and household economy women are found cleaning, tidying and other supportive tasks. They weed, transplant, clean the cattle shed and raise calves. In contrast, men perform core tasks and not supportive jobs. Their work involves more skill and knowledge, gives greater power and takes them far beyond the household into the wider world. **(See,Diagram 2: Gender: Route and Rooting Process.)**

Paradoxically, the development sector has carried traditional notions of women's work and men's work into their projects. An overview of the skill development of women here reveals typical patterns. The entire effort to create employment opportunities has been directed to supporting women's activities in traditional activities such as tailoring, embroidery, food processing, etc. Tailoring or craft work for women have found ready support through government schemes. Since access to such schemes are so readily available, women opt for such training only to find there are no profitable markets for some of these skills. A consequence is promotion of skills which are of marginal and supplementary nature and therefore with limited income potential. There are not many efforts to break into new occupations and skills. The government and even the ngo sector are caught in a time warp. For example, tailoring might have been the most appropriate skill for women at the turn of independence when these schemes were devised. But the governmental thinking has not kept pace with changing social realities. Indeed the government should not only keep up with changes in society but anticipate them and set the pace by taking a more imaginative view of the fields that women should be venturing in. The road to development indeed lies in women moving into occupations involving greater skill which give core rather than supplementary income.

BIOLOGY AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION

SOCIAL CONDITIONING
focussing on divide

GENDER HIERARCHY AND CREATION OF POWER BASE

POSITIONING OF WOMEN

- Vulnerability by the fact of biology
- Traditional skills and knowledge in limited areas of household, agriculture and livestock
- Limited access to resources, knowledge and technology.
- Work universe confined to household economy and farm labour
- Restricted and often symbolic participation in public institutions

POSITIONING OF MEN

- Strength derived by the fact of being male
- Ownership and property rights
- Acquisition of skill and resources that empower.
- Opportunities to participate in public domain
- Work universe related to technology, core processes of production
- Places men in enlarged universe
- Men emerge as planners, decision makers and in command

GENDER ROUTE AND ROOTING PROCESS

❂ Women and men as enactors. ❂ Family, neighbourhood, community, state, religion, law, media and institutions reinforce and regulate. ❂ Symbols, values, norms, language, etc., act as hidden persuaders and regulators. ❂ Caste, class, eethnicity contributes to different status between men and women, women and women, and men and men.

In the midst of all this social conditioning there is also a subjective dimension to gender. There can be vast differences between one culture and another, and even within cultures, in the way gender is perceived. This is the case in a diverse society like India with its cultural and social differences. For example, some women may view the purdah (veil) as a form of protection while others might consider it a form of social control. Similarly, working to earn an independent income might be viewed by some women as the route to freedom while others might think of it as a burden, and an imposition by others.

Co-operation in Spite of Differences

Men and women have developed different sets of interests. These differences flow from the performance of different tasks and responsibilities. Women are interested in water, fuel, backyard poultry, kitchen garden, nurseries and fruit trees because they are responsible for feeding the family. Men's interests relate more to activities which create value and bring profits. In livestock production and management, for example, men are concerned with activities located outside the household, such as grazing, breeding, trading and marketing. Similarly in agriculture, ploughing, watering, fertiliser application or marketing agricultural produce are men's activities. Men and women have different domains. Women's domain is an extension of the home and the skills required to manage it. Women's social boundaries are also restricted, affecting their mobility. These social boundaries also vary, depending on where a woman is in her life cycle or the caste or community that she comes from. An older woman, for example, enjoys greater freedom and mobility. Again, women from upper caste or class are burdened with social restrictions to move freely and be mobile. More importantly, men's participation in certain tasks in agriculture, livestock, dairying have also given them access to modern technologies. In agriculture, for example, men have learnt to operate new technologies such as tractors, sprayers, pumpsets, drip irrigation, improving their skillbase and control over the core activities in

agriculture. In contrast, technological innovations and modernisation in farming, dairying and other spheres have left women's work universe untouched. Ironically, the only implements that women use continue to be traditional hand tools. **(See, Diagram 3: Farm Work: Division of Labour and Technology.)**

One may hasten to add that there exists a few developmental interventions which have shifted women to new activities and to new technologies. The manually operated treadle pump to harness water in northern Bengal, Orissa, Bihar is a an example in recent times. Treadle pump is a low-cost manually operated technology to harness water in areas where the depth of ground water is 10–20 feet or even less. Essentially, this technology addresses the needs of small, marginal and landless farmers. Introduced two decades ago in Bangladesh and later in a few states of eastern India (West Bengal, Orissa, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and parts of Nepal), the treadle pump has several success stories to its credit. Typically, in traditional farming economies, men have always been associated with harnessing water for agriculture, primarily because of the use of technology (bullocks, and other native water harnessing systems). Women's role consisted in collecting and carrying water for household needs, vegetable cultivation or for horticulture. The entry of treadle pump has made women from marginal and small farming households (dependent on family labour for farming) operate treadle pump for farming activities. In a large number of cases women are actively using treadle pump to cultivate vegetables, tobacco and a variety of pulses. This itself is a major shift in the lives of women in that it brings women into machine activity and out of their household.

Another example is the women-managed eco-restoration programme of the Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan (KMVS) in the Kutch region of Gujarat. Women from ordinary farming and rural households have been mobilised and educated to manage construction of percolation tanks and watershed development activities. These women have successfully

Diagram 3

Farm Work : Division of Labour and Technology

MEN'S WORK	TECHNOLOGICAL AIDS	WOMEN'S WORK	TOOLS
■ Ploughing	} Tractor	■ Weeding (kurni)	
■ Sowing (Perni)		■ Cleaning	Sickle
■ Intercultivating (kulpni)	} Korpa	■ Pot-watering	Pots
■ Fertiliser application Spraying (large scale)	} Tractor Sprayer	■ Dibbling/Planting (lavni)	Baskets
		■ Fertiliser Application	Jatha (traditional stone grinder)
		■ Harvesting (kapnti)	
■ Irrigation	Lift Irrigation Water Pump Borewell Sprinkler Drip Irrigation	■ Hand picking	Cloth
		■ Pollination and Emasculationg cotton Seeds	
■ Harvesting Threshing (kallekarne)	} Thresher	■ Fodder Cutting	
■ Transportation Marketing	} Matador, Mobike Tractor	■ Transportation/head loading	
■ Managerial		■ Processing farm products for home consumption (eg. Channa, chickpea, mung, etc)	

recharged ground water, brought water to the villages, raised water tables through watersheds, changing the lives of farming communities. Women in these villages are now seen as possessing perceived power. However, such interventions continue to be negligible in number but provide powerful models for emulation.[1]

All in all, the universe of women remains restricted in contrast to those of men's which has a wider reach. Man's domain is the wider world of opportunities, reflecting his greater mobility and wider interests. While there is division of labour between sexes and a striking difference in what women and men do, their work is also ranked and given unspoken values as being superior and inferior.

*While men and women have different skills, interests and domains, they also come together to co-operate in many activitie*s. Being part of the household and family, they share collective interests as well in bringing up the family and making a livelihood through productive activities. In rural India, women and men work together in a wide range of productive activities in agriculture, irrigation, livestock and sericulture. This is the backbone of rural livelihood systems. *Because they have to co-operate, gender divisions do sometimes get blurred and there is a lot of give and take. But underlying all this are the forces of hierarchy, power and control which give men greater advantage. This men use to protect their own interests, consciously or unconsciously.*

Men too are Gendered

The gendering process has subjugated women. Having become conscious of their condition, women have made efforts to come out of their dependence and emancipate themselves from rigid traditions — all in an effort to carve out new social identities. What is not so readily recognised, however, is that men too are caught in gendered roles, although one may not describe their condition as subjugation. Research on men and

[1] Iyengar, Sushma, 'Empowerment of Rural Women in Kutch District, Gujarat Through Eco-Restoration', Unpublished.

masculinities talk about how men dominate most human societies. Over the decades, diverse perspectives have emerged on men and masculinities. The dominant theme of these perspectives relates to the issue of power. We are all familiar with the argument that men's domination of women has been made possible because they control the key social institutions in society. Men are also viewed as being rational whereas women are ruled by their heart and emotion. Some have argued that the symbolic equation of women with nature and men with civilisation over the last three centuries has vested men with more power. Because they are expected to hold power, be strong and rational, men are forced to conceal their vulnerability and dependence. They cannot display qualities such as caring and nurturing which are considered to be feminine. They have muted the feminine in them.

While the theme of power that men are said to hold has been much popularised and debated, what is not brought into discourse is the multiple identities of men and masculinities. This requires a reflection and analysis of what it means to be a man. What is more important is to understand what specific cultures have to say about the meaning of masculinity. When one begins to search, every culture may throw up several images of masculinities. Consider, for example, the portrayal of the masculine in different cultures through the eternal romantic hero, the sensitive intellectual, the martyr, the athlete, or the romantic poet and several others. What would then emerge is that masculinity has multiple expressions. What is being argued is that perspectives by men, on men and masculinities help to illuminate the many issues in the gendering process and its construction by society. *While there has been a vibrant discourse on men and masculinity in western countries, developing countries have lagged behind.* It is useful to remind oneself that masculinity has to be understood in relation to femininity. Without this focus, there is a risk of diverting one's attention away from women and the dynamics in gendering processes. Women and men have to

understand how they have articulated the masculine and feminine in their lives and by muting one over the other what have been their losses or gains.

EMANCIPATION AND TRANSFORMATION

What is Emancipation?

Emancipation refers to efforts by people to gain greater control over their lives. Most social relationships are unequal. There are many reasons why individuals find themselves in subjugated and oppressive relationships. Culture and tradition make up one important set of reasons. In most societies, women and men are treated differently right from birth. They are given different roles and responsibilities. *The problem is not that women have different roles but the lower value given to these roles as compared to those of men.* This is so deeply rooted in the minds of individuals and the collective consciousness of society that men and women carry different notions of self-worth. Another reason behind this social oppression is economic. Men and women have unequal control over resources, whether it is land, livestock, skills or knowledge. Finally there is the power dimension which is related to both the cultural and economic arenas. The unequal distribution of power between men and women derives from cultural values and unequal control over economic resources. Emancipation is concerned with the removal of exploitative and unequal social relations. It is therefore aimed at removing the domination of some individuals and groups by others. What emancipation questions is the socially constructed view that men and women have their respective roles which cannot be altered. *Emancipation is about choice. People want to have the right to choose between alternatives — different roles, responsibilities, career paths, life partners etc.* (See, Diagram 4: Towards Transformation.) Emancipation has also to be from one self. In this sense, emancipation implies the ability to have an open mind about oneself, about others and the world around us. Such openness vastly facilitates the kind of choices we just mentioned. (See, Chapter 3)

Diagram 4

TOWARDS TRANSFORMATION

Transformatory Processes

- Women's issues are linked to wider social issues

- Women and men do not live in two different worlds and are in constant social interaction

- Separate and collaborative space to deal with social issues e.g., exploitation, inequality, etc.

Long Term Strategy

Separate and Collaborative Spaces for Women and Men

- More just and humane relationship between women and men

Emancipatory Processes

- Greater control over lives

- Equal value to roles/experiences of women and men

- Equal opportunity and access to resources

- Removal of exploitative relations

- Right to choose

- Freedom from oppression

- Altering social values and culture that disable women and men

It is not enough for individuals to be freed from oppression or have the right to choose. *The more important – and more difficult – task is to alter the social values, norms and beliefs which lie at the root of oppressive practice, and deny individuals the right to choose.*

Emancipation has a clear practical agenda and is therefore action-oriented. Developmental efforts are routes to emancipatory processes. At a basic level, planners need to understand the meaning of emancipation. It is not just about the practical requirements of life. In gender, emancipation goes beyond the livelihood requirement of skill, occupation and access to resources. *It must address rigidly determined roles, oppressive social arrangements, and the absence of choice.*

Separate and Collaborative Space

What is the route to emancipation? During the past decade, women have followed the path of separate development. The central idea of separate development, as we have already discussed, is the creation of an exclusive space for women. *While separate development has many achievements to show, one can also view it as an essential first step, a course of action that is necessary and useful up to a point.* Eventually, however, it emerges that women's issues are linked to wider social issues. Men and women are in constant interaction over an entire range of activities within the household and in the community. In rural India, for example, livestock, agriculture, poultry farming, sericulture and almost every other activity involves joint effort. Men and women do not live in two different worlds. There is no point in educating women or in emancipating them if men are going to stay where they are. *Separate development is not an adequate long term strategy because it tends to see women in isolation from men and from society. Isolation has therefore to give place to integration at some point.*

When do women need to create separate space for themselves or when are collaborative spaces constructed for women and men to come together? Creating separate or collaborative spaces has no prescriptive path. A lot depends on the preparedness of

men and women and the developmental context they find themselves. Separate or collaborative spaces should be viewed in an evolutionary context. To share joint spaces women should have experienced some measure of empowerment. To develop confidence and self-worth, women do need separate space. Or to negotiate drunken husbands and domestic violence, women need the support of a mahila mandal or other men from larger kin network or village institutions such as Panchayats. From a zero base, if women are thrown into the midst of domineering men and male culture, they may beat a quick retreat. Panchayat Raj Institutions are good examples of where women could end up being physically present without making an impact. They cannot hope to make an impact unless they have gained confidence in a separate space. There will always be outstanding individual women who have the courage to stand up and influence. But what is needed are systemic answers which address average and not the exemplary individual. Empowering processes through separate spaces may help women to create small openings in men's world and widen their presence. While separate spaces may be necessary during initial stages of women's empowerment, it should not become an end in itself.

Integration means creating situations where men and women come together to look at gender issues – as for example, sexual division of labour, values attached to different forms of work, attitudes towards each other and so on. It is only through such a strategy that they can work towards a transformation of society. While practical issues of skill and capacity building can be handled through separate development, integration is the only route for dealing with fundamental issues of exploitation, inequality and transformation. Social issues such as domestic violence, alcoholism, dowry harassment cannot be dealt in separate spaces for long. Collaborative spaces have to be created where men and women come together to address these issues.

Chapter 3

Gendered Individual and Change

Individuals live by the meaning they give to their lives. Similarly, the collectivity called society holds because of the common framework of meaning that its members – women and men share. The connections between the individual self and society, therefore, are intimate and complex. Individuals shape and are shaped by societal institutions and their culture. This chapter addresses the complex ways in which gender enters the lives of individuals, taking deep roots in their psychological make up. Therefore, transformations in gender have to begin here – with the individual self and it is only through personal learning that individuals can take forward transformations into the society.

PERCEIVING AND EXPERIENCING

As women and men, human beings go through a bundle of experiences. These experiences which are intimately linked to the biological make-up of human beings are never the same in all places or at all times. From infancy, boys and girls become conscious of their body and biology. Dress, language, symbols, myth and culture are built around these biological differences so as to create distinct sexual identities. The primary agents of socialisation – family, neighbourhood, community, schools – help build distinct perceptions, beliefs and values on gender which take root in the minds of individuals. *By the time one reaches adulthood, every man and woman has a gendered 'I' (eye) that is deeply rooted in his/her psychological make up.* This gendered 'I' is at play at all times – perceiving, experiencing, believing and valuing –

Diagram 5

CHANGING THE GENDERED 'I'

GENDERED 'I'

- How I Perceive
- My Values and Beliefs
- My Attitudes and Behaviour
- My Self-Construction of External Reality

ALTERS

My Perception, Understanding and Analysis of

External Reality

To Bring Shifts in Gendered Positions of Women and Men
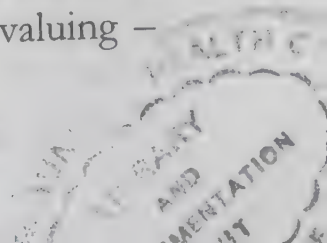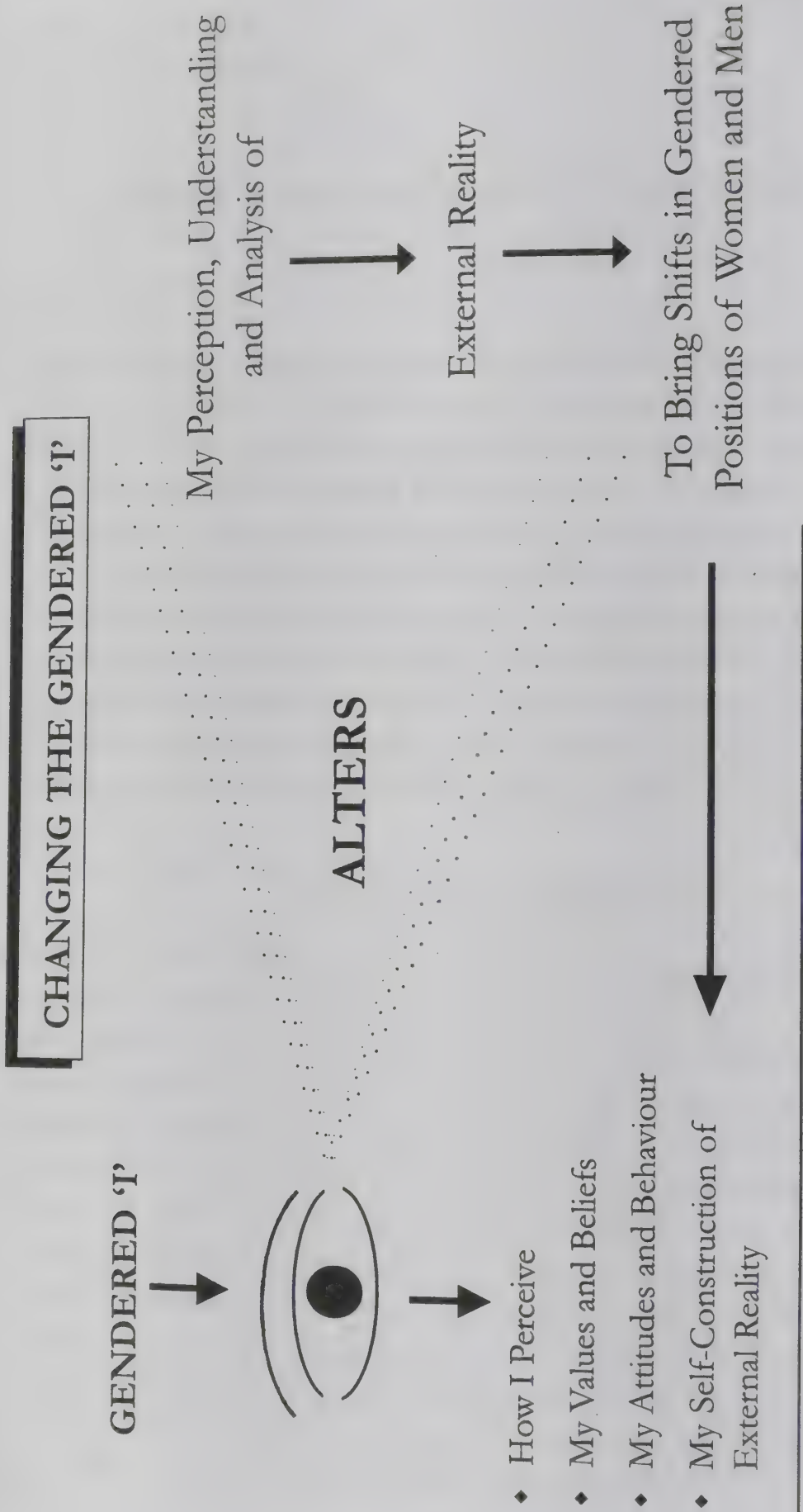
Note: Individuals have gendered eyes – the way they perceive and experience a reality. To become aware and gain insights into the way men and women have constructed this reality around them, the gendered lens one puts on need to be examined. One's belief and experience is a function of how one perceives and therefore how one has socially constructed that perception.

consciously or unconsciously. *The meanings which individuals give to gender are profoundly influenced by the way they perceive and experience 'I'.* **(See, Diagram 5: Changing the Gendered Eye.)** One may go through life, as most individuals do, without ever being aware of the divided lives and worlds of women and men. Women's movements the world over have shown that it is only when you share one's personal experiences (as many women's groups have done) that one begins to perceive the vast field of oppression and subordination that women experience. This sharing of experience also shows why the majority of women experience feelings of inadequacy and low self-worth. It is this learning that has made women alter their 'I's of perceiving their own reality and helped them to question and change their life situations. Similarly, a few men's groups which went through the journey of self-reflection on their stereotypical masculine ways have also realised how their gendered selves have allowed them to experience only one set of human qualities. Many of these men have altered their ways of experiencing reality – sharing work at home, bringing up children, etc.

INDIVIDUAL SELF IS CONTEXTUAL

Self is the only tool that women and men have to experience, observe, reflect and analyse the vast field of perceptions, emotions and meanings in gender relationships. The tricky part is that this individual self is both a tool and field of analysis. Moreover, the individual self is dynamically related to the wider socio-cultural environment, and is never separate. To understand the deep roots of gender within oneself, the first step is to examine the known (conscious) field of gender realities. The unknown (unconscious) is deep layered and is not within easy access, requiring skills in being consciously aware.

DIVIDING HUMAN QUALITIES AS FEMININE AND MASCULINE

Essentially, the feminine and masculine are two ways of experiencing life which are found in every human being. Cultures

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Diagram 6

FEMININE AND MASCULINE

MEN

Logical

Goal Oriented

Independent

Authoritarian

Objective

PROJECT

PROJECT

WOMEN

Caring and Nurturing

Vulnerable

Dependent

Emotional

Patient

FEMININE

TWO WAYS OF EXPERIENCING LIFE

MASCULINE

UNCONSCIOUS
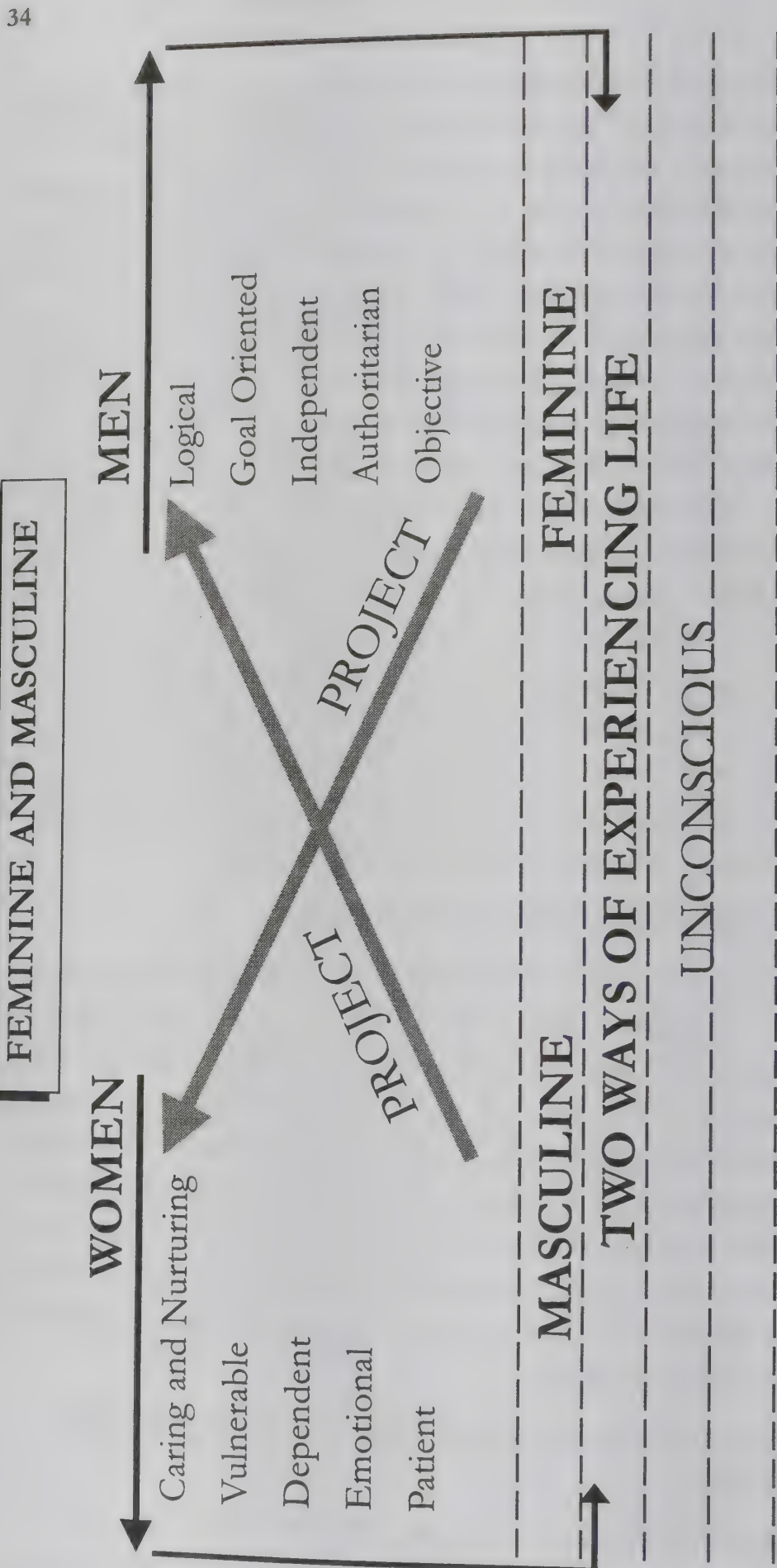
Note: Human qualities are divided and one set of qualities are projected on to men (masculine) and another set of qualities on to women (feminine) as being appropriate.

across the world have divided these qualities and projected as being appropriate to women and men. For example, men are viewed as rational, independent and emotionally strong while women are seen as caring, nurturing, emotional and vulnerable. These divisions are routinely internalised and reinforced by women and men. They are seldom questioned. (See, Diagram 6, Feminine and Masculine.) Men have gained primacy in the public domain as heads of households associated with bread-winning and shouldering family responsibilities. On the other hand, because women are linked to such activities as child rearing, welfare of the family etc. they have been positioned in the private world of family and neighbourhood. These divisions have compartmentalised human qualities as belonging to two separate worlds – public and private – although they have relevance in both the worlds.

Cultures have portrayed the masculine and feminine principles through symbols, myth and legend. While some cultures portray the two principles as being separate and distinct, there are other portrayals that integrate them as balancing dimensions of human nature. The well known examples are Arthanareeswara in Indian mythology and the Chinese Yin and Yang. However, in social practice, it is the separateness of the feminine and masculine rather than their integration that is generally highlighted. (See Diagram 7: Dynamic of Gender Consciousness.)

Diverse cultures have projected the opposing classifications of the feminine and masculine as the norm. This has resulted in the stereotype of men as being aggressive, competitive, logical, businesslike, independent etc. Qualities such as caring and nurturing, dependence, vulnerability etc. have been associated with the feminine. Gender stereotypes have masked the fact that femininity and masculinity are innate human qualities and not restricted to either female or male. What is to be recognised is that the feminine and masculine are interconnected and should be integrated for a fuller development of the human personality.

Diagram 7

DYNAMIC OF GENDER CONSCIOUSNESS

**Women and Men
with Distinct**

- Biology
- Traits and Attributes
- Roles
- Capacities etc.

**Symbolised and
reinforced by
CULTURE/TRADITION**

- Mythology •Folklore
- Legend •Religion

Bipolar

Ideal

Harm
onius

✧ Self-Concept
✧ Self-Worth
✧ Privileges
✧ Strengths and
Vulnerabilities

**Leading to Individual
Identity**

Social

Psycho-
logical

Biological

'Masculine'
and 'Feminine'
as
Internalised
States of
Consciousness

Note: This diagram is a holistic conceptualisation of how gender operates in individuals, community and society. There is a dynamic linkage between the various segments which influence each other. Together, these elements determine the way in which men and women develop self-concepts, self-worth and starting points in life.

GIVING DIFFERENTIAL VALUES

Human qualities have been given values, with some being considered more important than others. The ranking of these values finds expression in relationships and institutional practices. For example, not only are rationality, knowledge and objectivity given a higher value, but men are thought to have a larger share of these qualities. The systematic assertion of this notion by society and its institutions has resulted in men enjoying greater power, self-worth and privilege. Feelings and emotions are said to belong to the personal and private world. The primary place · of women has therefore been in the private domain of family and neighbourhood – arenas where emotions and feelings predominate. The psychological make-up of women has been deeply influenced by the assertion that they are emotional and vulnerable. Experience sharing in women's groups brings out their low self-esteem, dependency and sense of inadequacy. Even women who have many achievements to their credit reflect these mental states. To be recognised as rational, intelligent and independent beings in their own right – and not mere sexual objects – has therefore been the struggle of a large section of womankind.

The experience of men gives the other side of the story. Men are not without emotions and feelings, but they have been socialised into subduing them. That is the way they have grown up. 'Be a man and don't cry', 'don't sit at home and mope like a woman' and such other familiar usages which discount feminine qualities are all too familiar. At the same time, getting angry is not denied to men, and enjoys social acceptance. Experience sharing in men's groups shows that they have muted an array of soft emotions such as tenderness, fear and anxiety.

By nurturing the categorisation of human qualities as belonging to men and women, society and culture have fundamentally shaped our psychological make-up. The dominant participation of men in the public domain has given prominence to masculine values, muting the feminine. As women's

movements argue, this ranking of human qualities has invested men with power and control which they exercise in their relationships with women. The nurturing of feminine qualities has given women skills – like bringing up children and caring for them – which men have denied themselves. Awareness to these issues must go beyond changing mindsets to actually changing relationships.

CARVING A NEW IDENTITY

The process of gendering is two-way in that as individuals, women and men selectively imbibe and modify norms, values and orientations to suit their life contexts. For example, there are numerous individuals who have deviated from the prescribed path to take on atypical roles. There are plenty of women who are competitive, aggressive and tough. There are also men who have imbibed feminine values and learnt to be tender and nurturing. Each individual, therefore, has her/his unique personal set of mental programmes related to gender. The biology of sexes, the culture of gender and the personality of individuals together explain the different expressions of gender as also the distinct psychological identities that women and men operate with.

The biological and social roles of women and men give rise to distinct social and psychological identities. As a result, in their self-growth women and men set out from different points. Their biological vulnerability makes women seek protection and security. Men and women develop different notions of self-worth because the value attached to their work is so vastly different. In the normal course, to gain acceptance and to manage their relationships, women and men begin to conform to these social givens.

It requires conviction, if not passion, to alter deeply ingrained values that oppress, constrain and limit one's potential. Those who have attempted to liberate themselves from this situation have had to face personal anxieties, feelings of insecurity, powerlessness, conflict and social rejection.

The social pressure to conform and the difficulty in shedding deeply ingrained values pose the greatest challenge to change. *There is an ever present inner force within individuals which discourages a shift from their traditionally given positions. As a result, even the most enlightened women and men relapse into tradition. To break through, change must begin in the internal self of the individual and find its translation in relationships in the family, community and work universe.*

There are several examples of individuals who have brought gender shifts in families and organisations. To transcend the individual, this personal journey must at some stage translate into the change process within an organisation or a social movement that is attempting to redefine gender relationships in the wider society. Like-minded individuals need to come together to form a critical mass to take forward the change process. *Ultimately, the personal situation of an individual can never be separated from his or her social situation. Any change must therefore go beyond the self to address the wider context.*

For individuals who have tried to change their tradition-bound identities, the creation of a social space that gives them the freedom to make choices has been a struggle. But, to be free is also to be responsible in relation to others who are part of one's social network. Consider what might happen if women suddenly abandon their domestic roles — the social damage that it might inflict on others. Or, what the consequence might be of men abandoning their roles as breadwinners. What this means is that even as one goes ahead with the personal quest for greater space, it is necessary to carry others along. They have to be persuaded to see the need to shed the gendered image of themselves, and to recognise that there is within us all the human qualities, feminine as well as masculine. From this will flow the recognition of the oppression, exploitation and inequality that have characterised the relationship between men and women.

Chapter 4

Enmeshing Gender in Organisations

Every person carries within himself or herself gendered patterns of feeling and thinking which gets intricately woven into organisational culture. In other words, every organisation has a gender weave. Gender analysis would at once reveal how feminine or masculine an organisational cultures is? In many ways these masculine or feminine cultures influence the approach of organisations to their goal, objectives, structures, systems and the issues they address within their constituency. Understanding the gender culture of organisations can be revealing and offers excellent platforms to leverage transformations. **(See, Diagram 8: Gender and Organisation.)**

CONTEXT OF GENDER IN ORGANISATIONS

The objective of all development is to improve the life of human beings – alleviate poverty, improve earning potential, reduce exploitation and restore human dignity. This is the objective which inspires every organisation in the field of development, whether ngo, government department or semi-government organisation. All these organisations focus on certain core activities. The department of animal husbandry, for example, is concerned with livestock production, milk co-operatives with marketing milk, ngos with watershed development, credit and savings or agro-forestry. What gives direction to these organisations is a long term vision and more precisely formulated short-term objectives. Few of these organisations have an explicit viewpoint on gender. This is so even though many of their activities relate to women in one way or another. The more pressing concerns

Diagram 8

GENDER AND ORGANIZATION

Organisations
are
Complex
Collectives.

Organisation

Gendered Self

Gendered Self
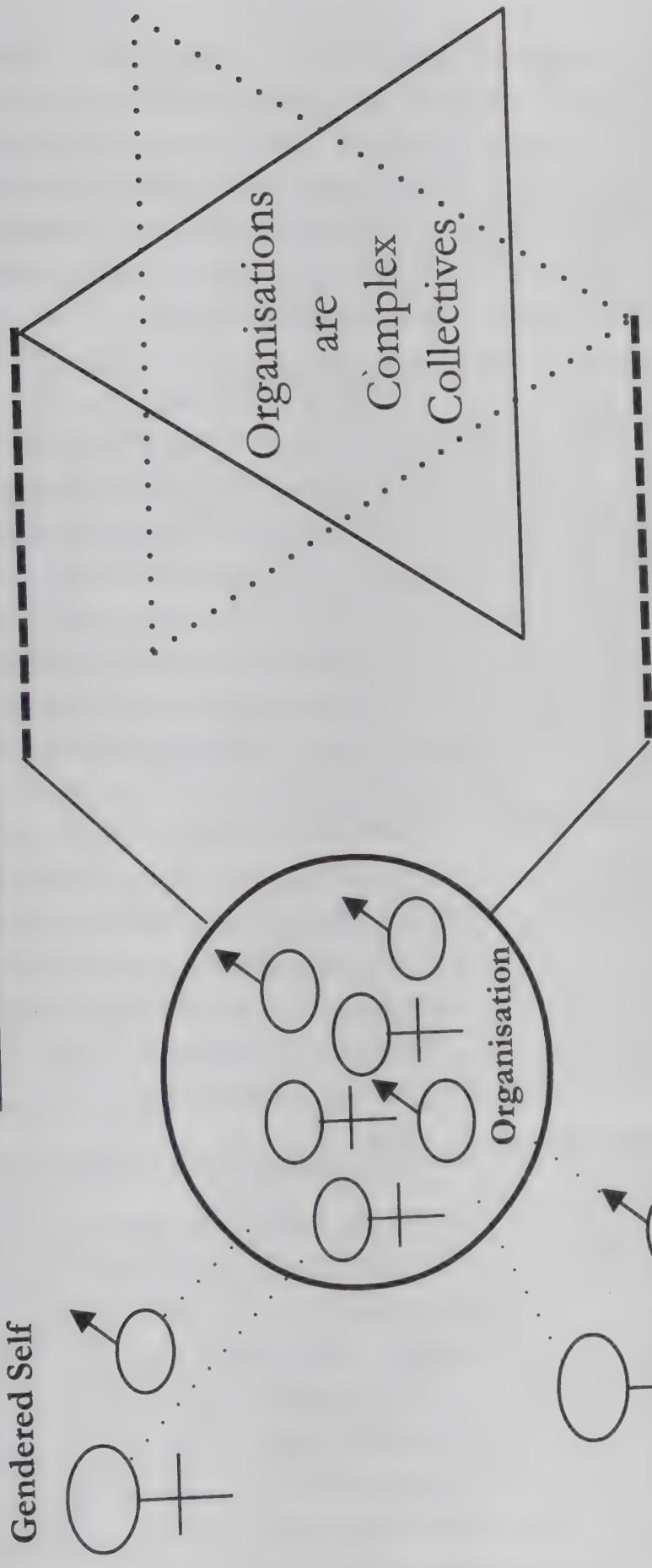
Gender Interventions Require:

♦ Understanding complex inner and outer reality of organizations

♦ Recognising the importance of genderising policy in organizations

♦ Change in system, structure, role and culture

of development push gender into the background. *Organisations may try to be politically correct by making the right statements, giving training or setting up special cells, but it is uncommon to find them place gender concerns and inequalities as major issues that must be faced squarely along with developmental issues.* The problem may not be a deliberate omission of the gender dimension but the simple inability to see the relevance of gender to their activities.

Traditional Patterns

Many of these organisations have a culture of gender which is traditional. Traditional notions of masculine and feminine influence the distribution of tasks, responsibilities and resources. Women are asked to take charge of activities related to women's development, while men keep away. For example, a large chunk of women staff in development organisations are either in clerical or secretarial positions. When men enter women's projects, they are generally found in managerial and not field-related functions. When it comes to training women, the trainers are also women. Women professionals are thought to have a special aptitude where women's issues are concerned, but not otherwise. Even here, developmental issues on women focus on typical areas such as health, education, mother and child care, nutrition etc., and rarely on equipping women in new technologies. Thus, the entry of technology or equipment immediately converts an activity into man's domain. Women are kept out.

Responding to the Changing Environment

One would expect development organisations attempting to transform people's lives to break through these barriers and set an example. This is not just a matter of ideology. It is also a practical requirement. When an organisation begins to look at its objectives and activities from a gender perspective, it will be forced to sit up to gender realities within its own house. The wider universe cannot be transformed by an organisation which refuses to look within itself. And when the wider world does change, unchanging organisations would seem even more

obsolete. To illustrate, an all India technical support organisation delivering service support to grassroots organisations for a quarter century has recently begun to address social issues and in particular gender in their programmes. Installing a simple hand pump in a multi-caste village is not just a technical exercise but a social one. The social response of the villagers to the installation of a simple pump depends on where and how it is located. Similarly, project interventions that enable leasing of village ponds or other common resources have similar implications. Who is being helped to access these resources?, To which community do they belong?, Do women have a share?, are a few questions that have to be understood in such interventions. The realisation that technologies need to address social and gender realities did not come from within but was brought to bear on this technical organisation by grassroots initiatives, ngos and donors. Technologies are not just tools and techniques but carry within them social values and orientations.

People : A Force of Change

The vital force of every organisation is people who engage in a collective effort to achieve a specific set of objectives. It is they who make the organisation a living entity. While these women and men might carry traditional notions and values in gender, they are also a reservoir of potential learners-who can be made aware and given opportunity to transform. **(See, Diagram 8: Gender and Organisation.)** There are individuals in many organisations who have become sensitive and made personal shifts. But their learning remain personal and do not result in a shared vision within organisations. *For this to happen a critical mass – a collectivity of people holding dynamic set of ideas – has to come into play.* For example, in many organisations, insights and expertise on gender has little chance of promoting a shared vision as they are held by a couple of individuals who are mostly women.

UNDERSTANDING THE REALITIES OF ORGANISATION : EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL

Promoting sustained change that brings about a shared vision calls for, as a first step, an understanding of the gender realities within the organisation. Among the many, organisations have two core realities-external and internal. While the wider environment of organisations make up the external reality, the internal reality includes a complex array of human processes. The relationship between the external and internal is systemic in that they are closely interconnected, influencing each other. The culture of gender finds expression in every reality of the organisation. **(See, Diagram 9: Organisation-Interconnected Realities.)**

Observable Exterior Reality

Organisations do not exist in a vacuum. *They are part of the larger socio-economic environment.* Happenings in this wider environment shape them in many ways. Consider, for example, the impact of government's decision to give representation to women in Panchayat Raj Institutions. Following this, many development organisations have taken up interventions to train and empower women in Panchayat Raj Institutions. Similarly, there is much pressure on development organisations to become gender aware. Mandates and allocation of resources for gender training are making major inroads. External realities have a multifold effect on organisations, as for example, shaping their vision and objectives, *influencing their resource base and altering their activity profile.*

Everywhere, organisations are guided by a *web of rules and regulations* that govern work relations. There is division of work and formation of hierarchies to pursue a range of activities. Activities are ranked along a hierarchy and different positions are invested with differing authority and power. Resources are allocated to individuals depending on their position, responsibility and power within the organisation. All organisations set up systems – channels of communication, decision making

Diagram 9

ORGANISATION - INTERCONNECTED REALITIES

External Reality
+ Social, political, economic, environment
+ Govt. schemes
+ New policies
+ Region, caste, class, ethnicity
+ Migration
+ Entry of new technologies, etc.

Organisational Dynamics
+ Interpersonal, intergroup
+ Leadership
+ Formal and informal power
+ Shared and conflicting interests.

Human Resource
+ Relationships
+ Competition
+ Collaboration etc.

GENDER

Structure/System
+ Tasks, responsibilities, roles, positions, rules.
+ systems (communication, decision making, etc.)
+ Skills and knowledge
+ Resources, financial, technical, etc.

Goals, Objective & Policy

Inner Reality
+ Values, norms
+ Trust/openness
+ Motivation/commitment
+ Resistance, biases, etc.

Note: (1) Adapted from an instrument developed by Ruedi Hogger, consultant SDC

(2) The star symbolises the interconnected external and internal realities of an organisation.

(3) This frame work can be used for analysing gender within organisation/projects.

processes, to mention a few, to effectively pursue their objectives. These systems are the visible dimensions of organisational reality. Capturing organisational patterns merely by its formal and externally visible features can be misleading. Let us take the example of a woman-headed organisation. The fact that a woman is heading an organisation may not mean that she is at the helm of affairs. She might just be a figure-head, with a group of men navigating the affairs of the organisation from behind the scene.

The Human Processes in the Inner Reality

To fully understand any organisation, one has to delve deep into the inner realties which are not readily visible. *The inner reality of an organisation unfolds in many ways and in different contexts — interpretation of rules, exercise of power and authority by women and men in interpersonal relationships, team work in the pursuit of organisational objectives.* The interplay of task, responsibility, rank, power and access to resources not only shapes the nature of work relations but promotes a distinct culture of the organisation, made up of its *diverse modes of behaviour.* As actors within organisations, women and men nurture this culture. But much of this culture is unstated and remains under the surface.

The inner reality also contains a vast pool of emotions, feelings, passion, motivation and other attributes which drive individuals and shape their attitude to change — resist change or help change to take place. While the discerning eye may see the reflection of this inner reality in the external face of an organisation, a superficial observer might well miss it. The field of women's development is replete with examples. The array of effort on women's development-training programmes, special cells and schemes in some organisations might be beautifully positioned. Visitors might be impressed with the overtly stated organisational perspectives on women. But the actual reality might be different. *Many organisations have created structures without substance so as to be politically correct on the question of women and gender.* To understand the intricacies of gender one

has to unravel the systems of organisations. While it is relatively easy to probe into structure, unravelling inner realities poses a major challenge. **(See, Diagram 9: Organisation: Interconnected Realities.)**

STRATEGISING FOR CHANGE

Awareness

Why and how do organisations initiate a change process that brings a shared vision on women and gender development? Does it happen because of pressures from the wider socio-economic environment or is it a response to pressing internal needs? Several forces provide impetus for change, but the beginning of all change is awareness and developing personal visions. The many gender sensitisation programmes have given thrust to raising this awareness in individuals. Encouraging individuals who want to change is the very first step. While it is essential to create opportunities for individual learning, the more important task is to bring the collective into this field of awareness.

Mandating Change for Advocacy

Every organisation has individuals who have the potential to become change agents and advocate change. Some might promote change at their own initiative. Such individuals are not plentiful nor would organisations react positively to such initiatives. It is the job of the leadership of an organisation to take the initiative to identify individuals who have the courage of conviction and encourage them with mandates and the resources needed to usher in change. As a first step, the leadership of organisations have to be sensitised to develop gender perspectives.

Critical Mass : Conviction and Passion

The more difficult dimension of change lies in developing a strategy with a critical mass of people and of ideas/values which would alter the culture of the organisation. Organisations which have such a strategy would then develop systems that endure

even as individuals come and go. For this to happen, organisations need individuals and collectives who are passionate about change. We have many examples of solidarity groups – of women, trade unions, ethnic groups – which have transformed peoples lives and made history with the sheer power of their convictions. Developing this critical mass within organisations is one of the essential steps.

Addressing Change

Organisations change when there is a pressing need or crises. For example, top functionaries may be forced to sit up and plan a gender intervention if the organisation is faced with the exodus of a large number of capable women. Such organisations need to question the gender culture that they have promoted in their organisations? Or, change is likely to be encouraged in organisations that are care-based and sensitive to the issues of exploitation and inequality. Such organisations might give prominence to gender issues. But, the large majority of organisations do not see the relevance of gender. However, organisations that have initiated a few interventions may be in different contexts. For example, organisations may have undergone successful gender orientation programmes, and moved towards creation of database that would take their gender initiatives forward. It is important to understand these contexts. (See, Chart 2: Gender: Paths of Change.) Understanding the history of organisations, their past and present is critical for any change process. With an impactful past, organisations tend to absorb new ideas. *What is critical is the organisation's preparedness to reposition and restructure its experiences along a trajectory.* For this, interventions in gender issues have to go beyond sensitisation into organisational development and renewals. The critical mass of people have an important role in integrating the gender question and carrying forward the change process.

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Chart 2

GENDER : PATHS OF CHANGE

Premise : Change is a function of the preparedness of the organisation to be open to learning

Organisational Context

Context 1

★ Focus on women

★ Desirous of introducing gender intervention

★ Have attempted gender interventions and had a negative impact

★ Started to focus on gender recently

Context 2

★ Introduced gender interventions-resulted in positive experience

★ Taking gender interventions forward

★ Future plans underway

Context 3

Positioning gender in the following

★ Policy

★ Structure

★ System

◆ Planning

◆ Monitoring

◆ Evaluation etc.

★ Experiencing problem with regard to resource

Context 4

★ Integrating gender within projects and organisations

◆ Structures and systems installed

◆ Ongoing monitoring

◆ Capacity Building (training etc.)

◆ Renewal processes

Note: These contexts are not linear. Organisational context can be in any one of them or have a combination from many contexts.

Preparing the Field

Changing gender contexts of organisations should begin only when there is a felt-need. One must hasten to add that often organisations may refuse to perceive the felt need. External agents – experts, donors have often made organisations see these needs. Many pressing issues in human (social and gender) and organisational development are not easily perceived within many organisations. Once there is a need, organisations have to go through the action learning cycles of experiencing, enquiry, experimentation and institutionalisation. It is simplistic to think that there are standardised steps or procedures that would prepare organisations for change. One may at best spell out certain critical enabling processes. These could be, for example, visibilising gender situations through data, gender analysis, reviews, raising critical questions and dialogues in strategic fora.

Analysing Gender

Identification of gender issues through systemic analysis – sensing what is going on and identifying potential areas of entry to initiate change is pertinent. These may be areas of felt-need, areas which are not likely to so rock the boat as to push the change process in the back-burner, or areas that have the potential to get certain consensual processes to move ahead. (See, Chart 5: Gender Frame of Reference.)

States of Preparedness

To initiate change, the preparedness and learnings of three categories of people are critical. Those who give mandates, those who have been given mandates and the rest of the organisational system. The moot question is what is the field of influence of those who are initiating change. Let us take the example of gender training programmes which aim at developing awareness and perspectives. Who are sent for these programmes? Organisations rarely send their senior functionaries who can impact their organisations. Typically participants are either women or those who are routinely sent to such training

programmes, usually from the training units of organisations. Does the change process enjoy the support of the senior functionaries of the organisation? What is the commitment and capacity of those who are initiating change? Answers to these questions are pertinent to create areas of trust and consensus for change.

Initiating change is a matter of strategy. Women's empowerment projects do not plunge headlong into issues of rights. Most of them gain entry into non-threatening areas like literacy or health but progress gradually to broadbase their activities to address hard core issues relating to decision making, rights etc. Savings and credit groups that have proliferated in the countryside have similar potential to emerge as empowered groups. For this, they have to go beyond motivating women to save and access credit. The members have to cohere as groups of solidarity, provide platforms for sharing each other's concerns and collectively resolve the many social problems that women are burdened with. At some point, they have to collaborate with men and build alliances with wider society. On the other, the large chunk of these groups have confined their activities to mere credit delivery. As a result, many of them fall on the way side and become defunct once the projects or ngos which have promoted these groups phase out.

Creating Trust

In many organisations, trust levels on gender issues have been eroded by the pressure to promote segmented development of women. To induct gender in organisations, the creation of trust and consensus are of utmost importance. For this men have to be brought into the stream of gender development. A good deal of processual work is involved to bring men on board – dialogue, awareness building etc. through several types of learning events (training, colloquiums, workshops, action research etc.)

Genderising Policy

Organisations have many policies. Policy is a statement of

intention. It is something that evolves over time through a gradual process. When it comes to gender, it expresses the intention to bring about the kind of changes we have discussed. Policy in gender could run the risk of relapsing into a numerical game. In the name of equity and be seen as gender-balanced, organisations might give representation to women on various committees, quotas in employment etc. *Thus organisations/projects may have a presence of women but not a culture of gender. Gender policy is about beliefs and values that involve human processes to bring about a humane culture of gender into practice – in systems, structure, goal, objective, ideology, activity, etc.* How should an organisation integrate gender in its policy? It is impossible to prescribe a blueprint on the substance of gender integrated policy in the abstract because the issues vary greatly from one organisation and situation to another. In other words, the substance is very much contextual. What one can consider is the methodology, or the way to go about developing a gender perspective of policy.

Policy is a Process

Every organisation has an activity mix and therefore a constituency. Its developmental initiatives are aimed at a set of people. It is important to understand the concerns and interests of these women and men, and their readiness for change and transformation. Gender integrated policy, therefore, should evolve out of this understanding, and cannot be a matter of rigid and bureaucratic prescription from above. For example, women might in certain situations want separate space for development. This is illustrated by women's sanghas and co-operatives which give them freedom to grow. In others, they may want not segmentation and differentiation but integration with men. To sustain an initiative, men and women have to make their own choices.

Activity as a Route

Another important dimension is the nature of the developmental activity. There is a mistaken belief that 'gender

policy' requires a separate, stand-alone project. Gender, however, is not an issue that can be dealt with in isolation. It manifests itself in all kinds of activities and can only be seen in the context of these activities. Take for example the introduction of new technologies in agriculture which claim to be low- cost and within the reach of the small farmer. These technologies may be efficient in the sense of being both effective and affordable. They serve a developmental objective, but that does not mean they serve a gender objective. What they might do is to perpetuate the sexual division of labour and the nature of the relationship between men and women. They may leave the members of the household – men and women – exactly where they were in terms of access to resources, opportunities, skill and status. Gender needs a vehicle to travel, and activity – in fact, any activity – is the vehicle. What this means is that development organisations should take a close look at their activities and examine their gender consequences and implications.

And the next step is to ask how these activities can be made more gender aware so that they become agents of change and not of status quo. *For example, questions have to be asked about what technologies in watershed development, sericulture, dairying and rural credit are achieving?* Do they address gender issues, or merely try to put more income in the hands of poor families in the expectation that everyone would benefit? Do they change or reinforce the equations between men and women at the level of the family and community? Are they at all aware of these issues? Are they sensitive to them? A gender integrated organisational policy should provide guidelines to these questions. **(See, Chart 3: Analysing Gender in Organisation for Policy.)**

ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE PROCESS

Integrating gender within organisations is a continual process. This cannot be achieved through one time interventions. Transformations in gender occur through multiple processes of resistance, acceptance, commitment and preparation.

Chart 3

ANALYSING GENDER IN ORGANISATION FOR POLICY

CONTEXT

1. History

i. What factors influenced/promoted the emergence of your organisation?
ii. How did your organisation come into existence?
iii. Who were the major actors? Are they still there? What were their views on women and gender?
iv. What phases of evolution has your organisation gone through in terms of its objectives and reach? Place gender here.
v.. What were the major shifts in the policy of organisation? Where and how did gender figure in policy?

2. Environmental Factors

*   Identify specific environmental (macro and micro) factors that are influencing your organisation and its activities (social, economic, political).

3. Purpose

*   Goals and objectives
*   Does gender figure in the purpose? If yes, elaborate.

4. Constituents of your Organisation

*   Who are your clients?
*   Mix of activities.
*   What is your organisation good at? Does the strength of your organisation derive from a unique set of capabilities or resources?

5. Describe structure and systems in your organisation. Indicate where women and men are positioned and analyse implications.

*   Structure: Refers to formal arrangements, positions, hierarchies and levels.
*   System: Refers to processes that give effect to formal arrangements.

- Decision making, reporting, managing, planning, monitoring, evaluation, etc.
- What are the channels of information - meetings, newsletters, campaigns, etc?
- Content of information - task-related, knowledge-related, decisions etc.
- Access to information for women and men at various levels.

6. Training

- Profile of training
- Methodologies
- Approaches
- Linkages between training and practice
- Budgets
- In all of the above, place gender.

7. Performance and Reward systems - How dynamic and creative are the reward systems to stimulate and motivate improved performance?

- How are these systems influenced by gender?

8. Resources and its Distribution

- Availability of resources within and outside (Human resources, women/men, financial, and other resources)
- Programme versus administration
- Infrastructure - movable and non-movable
- Knowledge and capabilities (women and men)

9. Core Issues/Problems Currently being Experienced by the Organisation

Note: After analysing the gender dimension in the above elements, it is possible to identify gender concerns/issues to integrate in policy.

Integration of gender initiatives gets woven through these processes. Even as the change process is set in motion, gender awareness and dialogue have to be kept alive by sharing experiences, allowing spaces for differences, orientation work shops, etc. Building a network with other on-going debates in the wider environment can lend further strength to the process. As the change process picks up momentum, there should be special efforts to enrol greater numbers of people, in particular men.

Development organisations are in the business of planning change to improve the life situation of people in their constituencies. Planning change involves a great deal of individual and collective effort in setting up objectives, identifying areas for intervention, accessing resources (technical, financial and expertise etc.), involving people at different levels, setting up a time-frame and above all developing strategies that bring significant and sustainable impact. More importantly, all this has to be done without losing sight of the interconnected nature of organisational realities. A strategic intervention in one domain can impact other segments of the organisation, and create new areas for intervention. Planners should not only be equipped to identify areas where a given set of interventions is making an impact, but be prepared to deal with changes that are unleashed elsewhere. Let us take the promotion of cost-effective technologies (drip irrigation, treadle pump), for example. If an organisation plans to develop not only user-friendly but women-friendly technologies and launches a study to understand the problems that are experienced in the use of treadle pumps or other technologies, the findings (if implemented) might open up a host of potential areas for intervention. The organisation might have to gain gender perspectives to develop women friendly technologies, competency to approach women for marketing their products etc. What is being argued is that when a gender agenda is planned, skilful leveraging of interventions has the potential to bring about changes across the board,

compelling organisations to integrate elements of gender in all of their domains.(See, Diagram 10: Locating the Impact of Gender Intervention within the Organisational Universe.)

CHANGE AND STABILITY

When gender interventions bring change, there will be a clash with forces of tradition. There will be resistance and opposition. (See Diagram 11: Forces that Shape Transformations.) Let us take the example of interventions that have brought women into the decision making bodies of watershed, joint forest management, credit or housing associations. Questions have been asked about the validity of their presence and capabilities. There will be resistance from men and village society to women's new roles. We have examples of even violent conflict erupting when women have been given charge of managing watersheds. To prove themselves, illiterate village women had to go to great lengths to capacitate themselves and prove their worth. It is therefore, not sufficient to give formal representation to women on decision making bodies. What is essential here is to enable women strategise *when, where and how* they should collaborate with men and village society. For change to sustain, the strategies have to be developed by women themselves.

Stabilising change requires space and time. Conflict that comes with change cannot be muffled but must be given sufficient space for articulation and dialogue. More importantly, change process has to be watchful of the consequences that it unleashes. Proactive initiatives have to accompany to ensure a smooth passage to change. Without this caution, the chances of gains that interventions might make may be lost. To sustain any change process, optimal spaces have to be given to stability. (See, Chart 4: Strategising Change in Organisations.)

Diagram 10

LOCATING THE IMPACT OF GENDER INTERVENTION WITHIN THE ORGANISATIONAL UNIVERSE

Structure
Position of Women/Men

Systems
Decision Making, Communication, etc.

Skill and Knowledge

GENDER

INTERVENTION

Others

Policy

Goals and Objectives

Research and Development

Values/Motivation
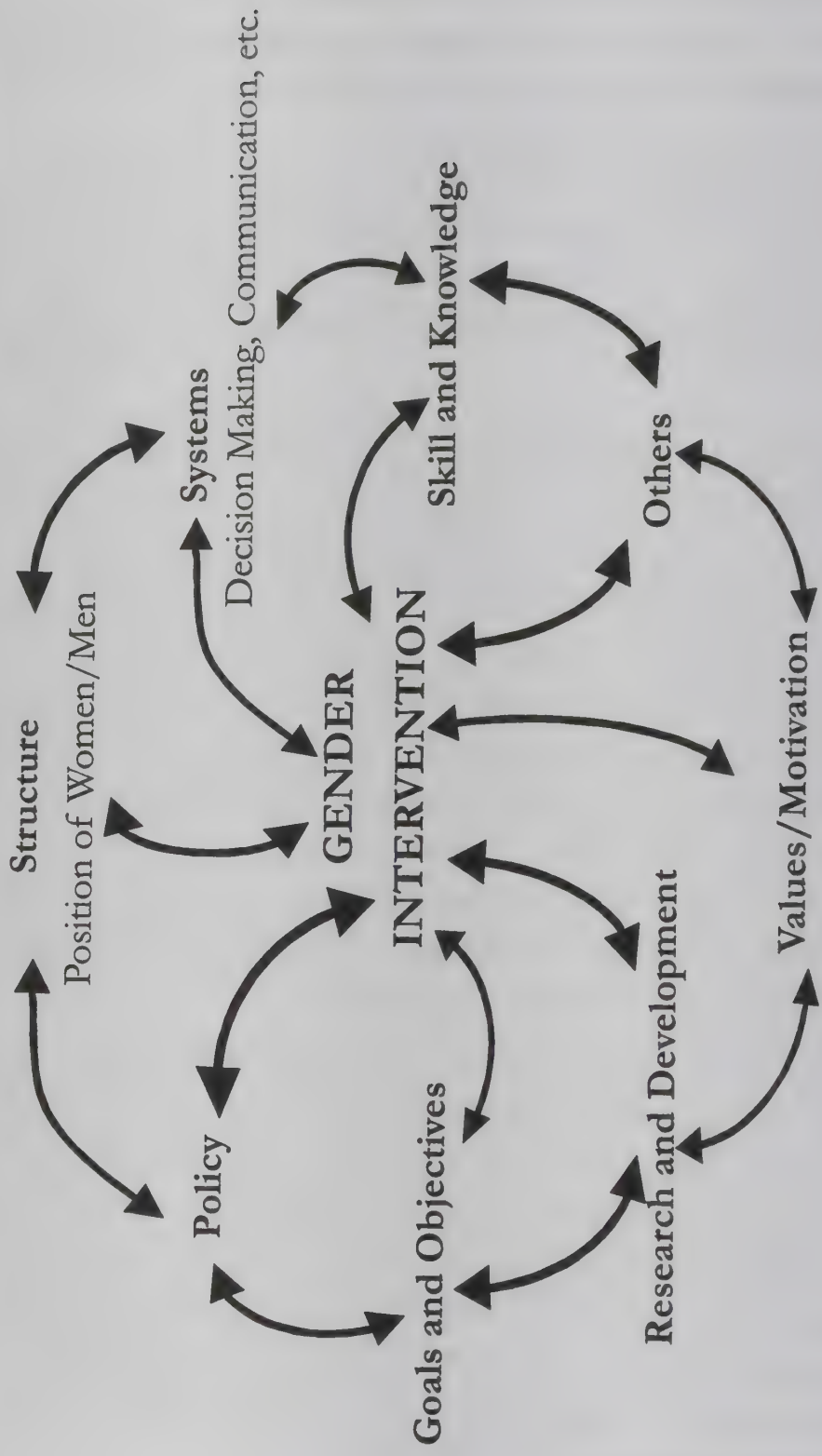
Note: This diagram will help practitioners to place gender interventions and map their potential/actual impact on other parts of the organisation for further planning

Diagram 11

FORCES THAT SHAPE TRANSFORMATION

FORCES THAT OPERATE TO KEEP THE STATUS QUO
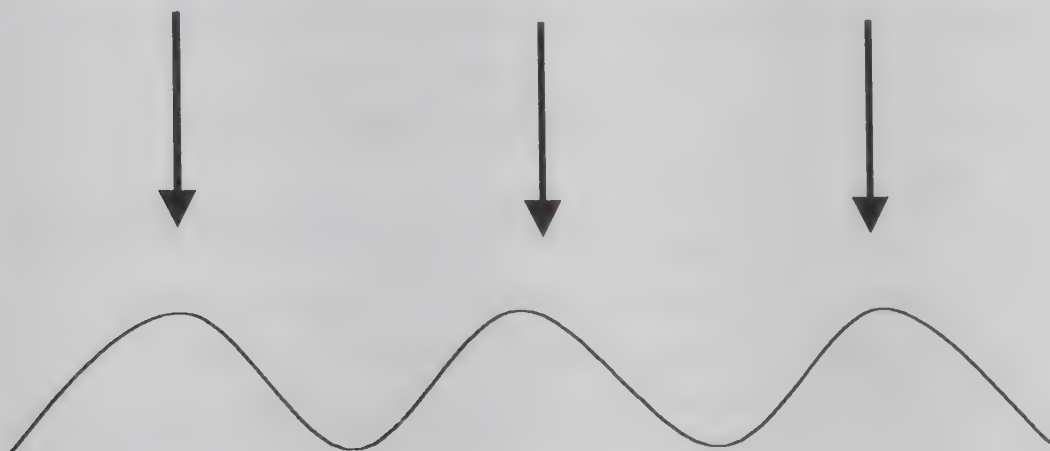
GENDER TRANSFORMATION
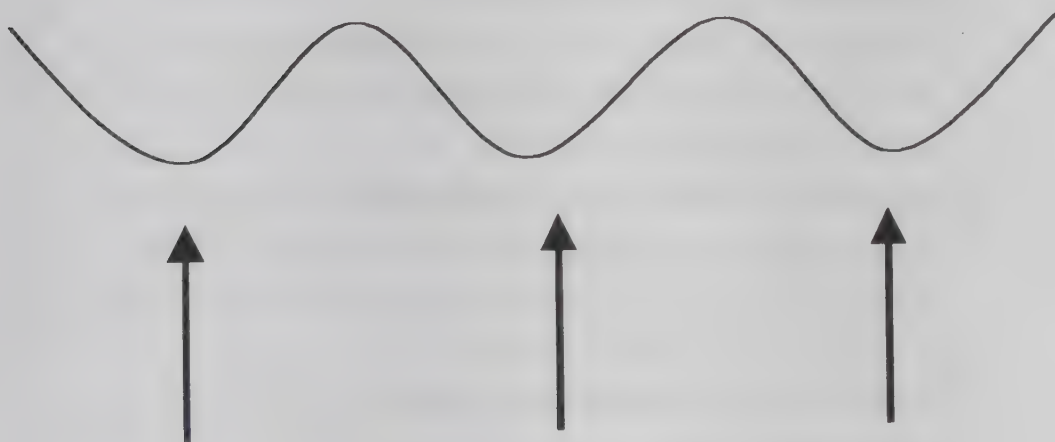
FORCES THAT HELP FACILITATE CHANGE

Note: Two sets opposing forces constantly influence change processes. One set of forces hinders change, promoting status quo. There are also forces that promote change. When forces of change collide with status-quoism, destablising forces may set in to scuttle the change process. What is important is to enable a dynamic and functional interaction between change and stability for taking forward the change process. The above diagram serves as a tool to identify forces of change and stability and strategise the change process.

Chart 4

STRATEGISING CHANGE IN ORGANISATIONS

- **Building and Sustaining Awareness**
- **Advocating Change**
  - ❖ Encourage and support individual initiatives
- **Concerted Effort to Build a Critical Mass Within Organisation/Project**
- **Preparing the Field**
  - ❖ A situation analysis of gender
  - ❖ Studies and creation of data-base
  - ❖ States of preparedness of people
  - ❖ Capacitating through learning and giving mandates
- **Creating Trust**
  - ❖ Enrolling more people through dialogues, learning events, and including more men.
- **Sustaining the Change Process**
  - ❖ Dialogue, studies, sharing, learning from experience, building alliances with initiatives in wider society, and enrolling more people.
- **Being Aware of Inter-Connected Realities of Organisation**
  - ❖ Identifying interventions, locating the impact of intervention and moving towards further interventions in areas where change is occurring.
- **Giving Appropriate Spaces for Change and Stability**
- **Genderising Policy**
  - ❖ Evolving gradually
  - ❖ Evolving policy from the concerns and issues of women and men
  - ❖ Contextual
  - ❖ Integrating gender in all activities

Chapter 5

Methodologies in Learning

ROLE OF INSIGHTS, INTUITION AND REASON

To delve into deep layered gendered states, there has to be an interplay of reason, insights and intuition. Insights are sudden or unexpected understanding that comes from within individuals on the basis of experience. Often looking at an issue holistically enables insights to dawn. However, intuition which falls in the realm of the unconscious may be defined as an 'acute sense of the happening'. An intuitive mind, therefore, can enable synergy between reason and insights. Reason, insights and intuition are not opposites, as is often assumed. It is the overemphasis on rationality that has submerged the intuitive faculty in individuals. Great thinkers are known for integrating these faculties in their creative thinking. Intuition lies in the field of emotions – conscious and unconscious. To understand gender states, women and men have to relate to this field. It is only when individuals expand their awareness that they begin to see that personal feelings and experiences are not separate from the social world in which they live. With this realisation comes an empathy to the way women and men are entrapped in their gendered selves.

LEARNING THROUGH EXPERIENCE

The fundamental question in any change process is: 'Where and how do I begin? Change is about learning. There is no one route or method in learning. Awareness and insights come through many ways. The best learning comes from experience. However, experience alone does not guarantee learning.

Reflective awareness, experimenting with insights through trial and error are critical. Handled with expertise, experiential learning is a powerful tool for individual and collective learning. Experiential learning could include several methods such as dialogue, keeping personal journal, learning events to take the change process forward. **(See, Diagram 12: Experiential Learning.)**

DIALOGUE

Dialogue is a powerful learning tool. There are two types of dialogue. Every individual engages in an internal dialogue within oneself and an open dialogue in collaborative situations. Keeping a journal, written for oneself is a an effective accompaniment for internal dialogue. A personal journal is a place for honest reflection and self-questioning. There is also an open dialogue in collaborative situations where, the purpose of dialogue is to arrive at new ways of thinking that stems from the insights of the collective. A skilled facilitator can unleash learning processes by ensuring participants take ownership of the process and the outcomes. The potential of dialogue in gender is immense. Women's movements have demonstrated this. If one agrees that gender refers to the relationship between women and men, then dialogues in gender has to include both.

GETTING CONNECTED TO GENDERED STATES THROUGH SYMBOLS

The field of gender is replete with symbols which lie submerged in the 'unconscious' of the individuals. Cultures have constructed gender, using the idiom of symbols. To get connected to one's deep-layered gendered states, the route of symbols can be used in learning events. Since symbols express and send messages, participants in learning events could be invited to express symbolically, and get connected to what lies in their unconscious. These exercises demand sensitive handling by an expert facilitator.

Portrayals of individual selves through symbols or drawings are good methodologies for expressions of the personal states.

Diagram 12

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Moving Towards
Further Learning

Application/
Experimenting
with Insights

Going Through
Experience

Reflection on
Experiences

Individual

Group/organisations

Analysis and
Insights

Gaining
Awareness
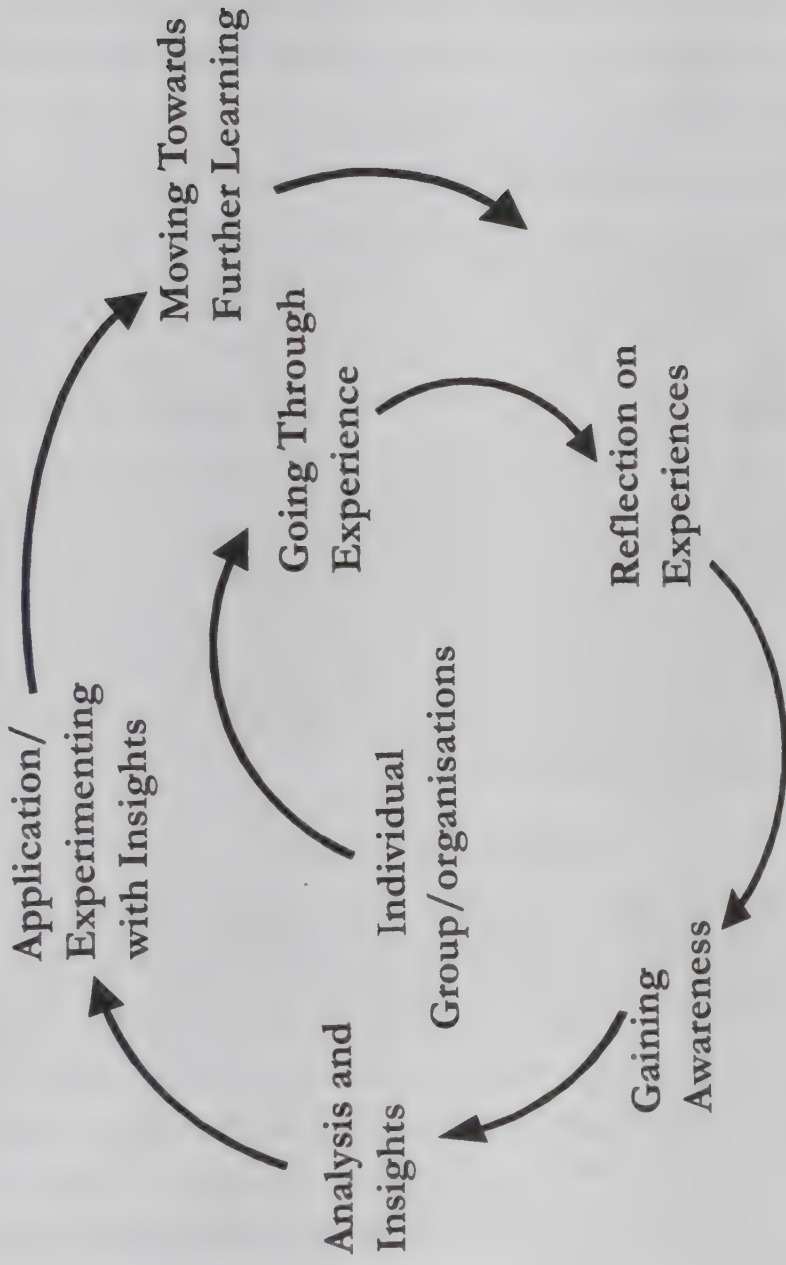
Note: The above diagram is self-explanatory, Individuals and organisations can use this concept for learning. Experiential learning often takes place spontaneously. Becoming aware of this learning cycle results in the recognition of the significance of the many steps in learning. It is only by going through these steps in learning that one gains insights.

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These may be conscious and more importantly unconscious states of individuals and groups. Through a well designed exercise, facilitators enable participants see the connections between the conscious and unconscious. Such exercises provide clarity to individuals and help them anchor themselves in their new found wisdom.

TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

Planners and practitioners are keen on the know-how of integrating gender in their interventions. Many tool kits have been brought out by bilateral and multilateral agencies on best practices in gender. In this book we have kept away from giving specific tools and techniques. Our belief is that a large part of gender falls in the area of values and orientation. It is only a humanistic approach that can reveal connections between subjective perceptions of reality with objective social world. Therefore, a great deal of work in gender interventions lies in the field of analysing and understanding inner processes within the individual and organisations.

Laboratory Method

One of the effective methods in personal learning has been the laboratory method where the participating individual goes through a journey of self-reflection, focussing on the 'here and now'. As a group women and men get in touch with their feelings, biases, stereotypes to gain insights. This methodology has to be handled by a sensitive and skilled facilitator in personal development. This method of learning is non-directive and follows the philosophy of adult learning. (See, **Diagram 12: Experiential Learning.**)

Semi-Structured Exercises

Another methodology in personal learning relates to semi-structured exercises. Women and men come together and are made to go through a series of exercises designed to bring out their perceptions, levels of awareness and learning. This

methodology requires a facilitator skilled in contextual designing and process the emerging patterns. Role play, mind-body exercises, self-rating instruments and other exercises that bring out individual qualities, tendencies, mind-sets etc. are used in semi-structured work.

Any facilitated learning in gender should include an array of diverse methodologies – exercises (structured and semi-structured) and activities (open dialogues, unplanned group discussions, role play etc.) – to unfold learning processes within the group.

Time, Space and Skills : A Frame of Reference

Women and men have a gender trajectory-the lives they have led (past), their current position and identities(present) and the future that awaits them. Those who want to transform their lives have to analyse how multiple forces (social, economic, political and technological) have constrained or enabled them to capture opportunities, build skills, knowledge and carve their identities. Analysing the position of women and men through the frame of time, space and skills helps one to identify potential areas for planning change. **(See Chart 5: Gender: A Frame of Reference.)** This frame of reference can be used in a variety of contexts, in particular for situation analysis, planning, evaluation and as a teaching tool.

Chart 5

GENDER : A FRAME OF REFERENCE

Dimensions

Socio-cultural
- Positioning women and men through social categories. (caste, tribe, class, ethnicity, gender)
- Values, beliefs, etc.

Economic
- Valuing and accessing resources and services

Political
- Legitimizing and mandating power and authority

Technology
- Using new methods to build and combine information, skills

Defining
Limiting

Commands
Determines

Controls
Empowers

Impacting

Time

- Course of events
- Past, present and future
- One's position in life span/cycle
- * Personal time (availlability)
- Development stages of institutions, organisations, movements.

Space

- Freedom of choice and movement.
- Access and ownership
- Identity, rights and responsibilities
- Separate space and collaborative space for women and men.

Knowledge and skill

- Information
- Abilities
- Practice

* Personal Time
- What is my time availability and how is it being used?
- Where am I in my life cycle?
- How has my past influenced my present?
- What are the implications of my present to my future?

◇ Space
- Does my personal history and culture provide opportunities for me?
- How has technology changed my role and identity?
- What impact does it have on my domain - my house, family, land, relationshipes, authority, etc.?
- Does it offer more choice or does it restrict my movement?

Explanatory Note

Space and time are basic categories of human existance, mutually interactive and influencing each other. Space refers to freedom of choice and movement, identity and rights. The history of human kind reveals the complex ways in which the politics of technology and socio-economic values have defined social relationships, life situation and chances of women and men. This is reflected in the domains, identities, freedom of movement, knowledge and skills of women and men. Application of this frame reveals that gender relations are dynamic and are interwoven by a complex set of forces stemming from the politics of technology, social and economic values. Analysing gender through this frame of reference captures its complexity and dynamic. This frame of reference can be used to create a data-base, arrive at diagnosis or plan interventions. Depending on the context, this frame should be used flexibly.
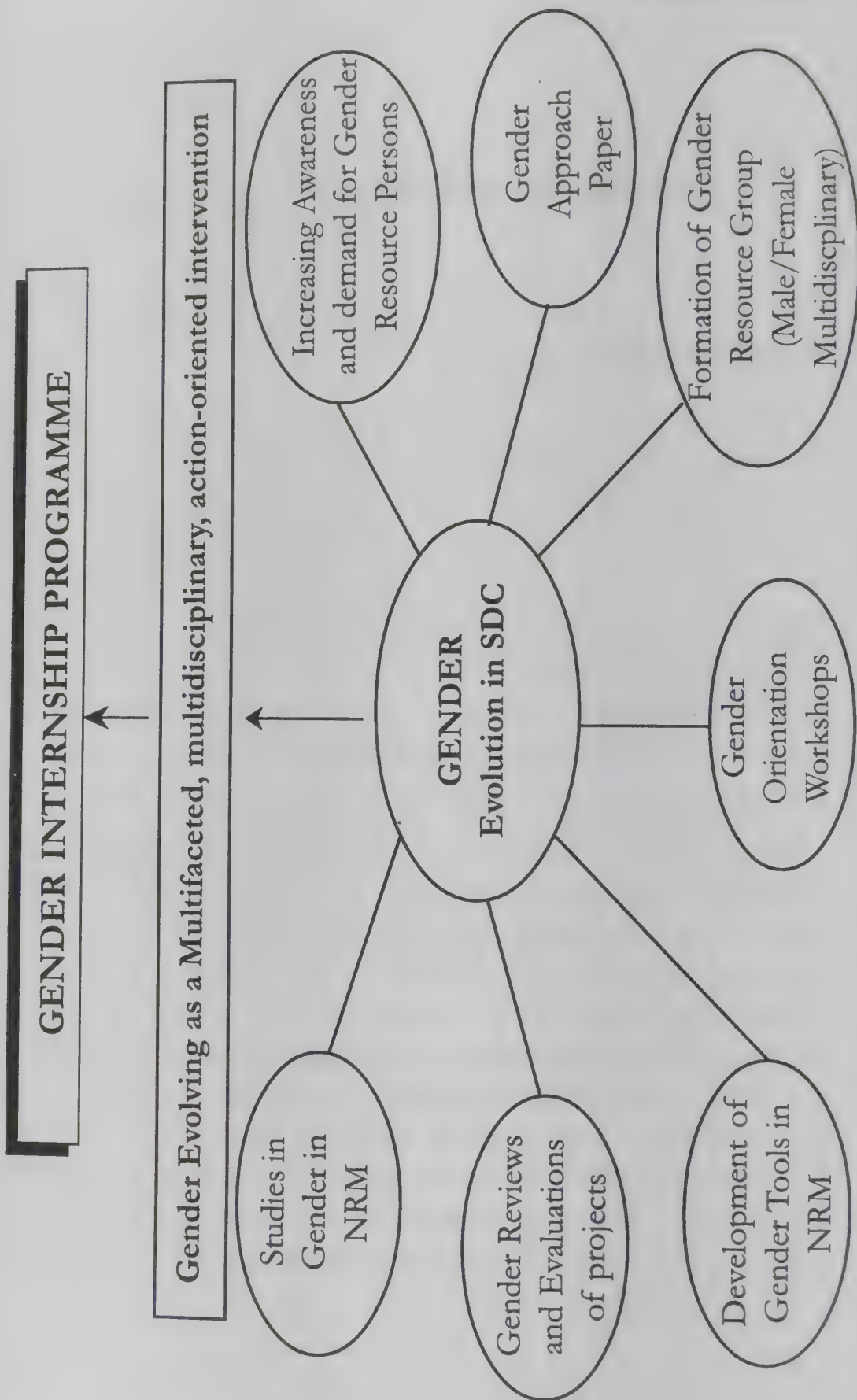
Gender Internship Programme

EVOLUTION OF THE GIP

Among the many learning in gender, a few core insights motivated the HID Sphere of SDC to plan for a long term intervention. While one time interventions created some awareness and initiated a change process, sustaining this change emerged as a key concern. The concept of gender that is elaborated in the previous chapters found echoes in the Gender Internship Programme. (GIP) The GIP was a two way process in that it brought a confluence of ideas from different quarters and evolved through experimentation and action learning.

The Gender internship Programme was an outcome of several small initiatives in gender within SDC and its partners in natural resource management. These initiatives included analysis and reviews of gender processes in watersheds, livestock and dairying. One of the initiatives was gender orientation programme within SDC to gain greater awareness. All this resulted in developing an approach paper on gender within SDC. In 1995, SDC brought together a gender resource group comprising of experts from different disciplines to explore possibilities of planned interventions. The NRM sphere of SDC carried this dialogue forward which eventually resulted in planning for a programmatic intervention in gender. **(See Diagram 13: Evolution of GIP.)**

Diagram 13

GENDER INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME

Gender Evolving as a Multifaceted, multidisciplinary, action-oriented intervention

GENDER
Evolution in SDC

Increasing Awareness and demand for Gender Resource Persons

Gender Approach Paper

Formation of Gender Resource Group (Male/Female Multidiscplinary)

Gender Orientation Workshops

Studies in Gender in NRM

Gender Reviews and Evaluations of projects

Development of Gender Tools in NRM

GENDER INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME (GIP)

GOAL : Develop gender resource persons within partner organisations.

Programme Structure

The duration of GIP was 14 months. There was a preparatory phase of six months to design the programme, develop course material, select participants, and identify resource persons. The design of GIP included four modules, with a duration of 7 to 10 days for each module. The inter-module work for each intern between the first and second module consisted of taking up a tiny intervention either within their organisation or in their project work. This was followed by an action learning project to be completed before the fourth module. The multi-disciplinary team took upon the role of giving guidance and support for the action learning projects of the interns. (See, Chart 6: Programme Design.)
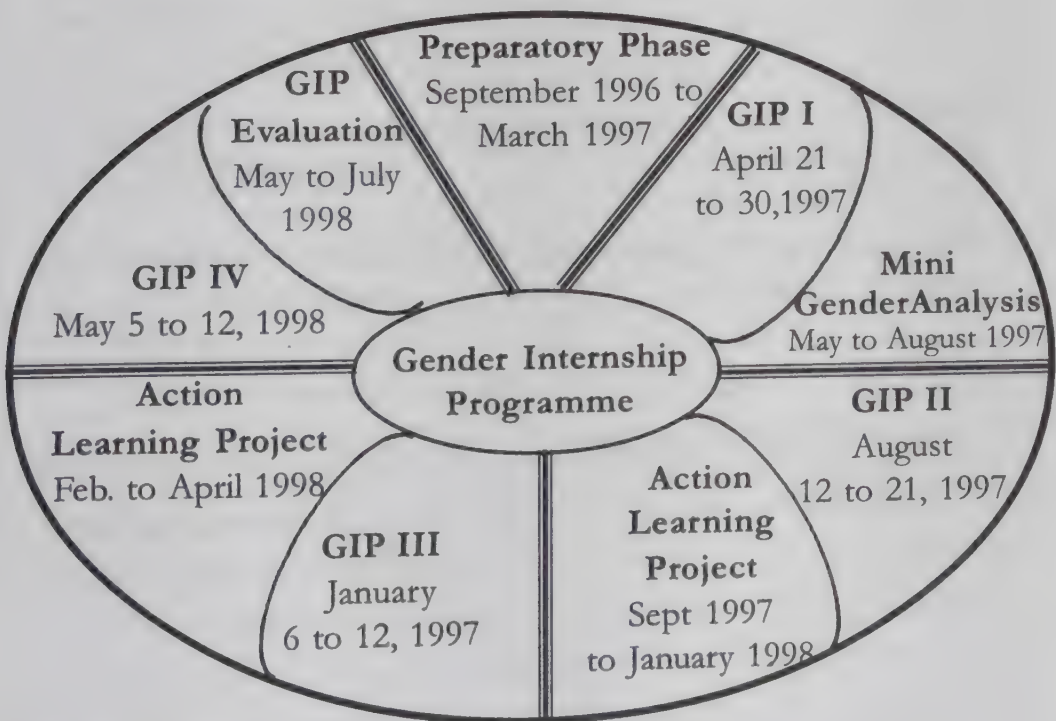
Diagram 14

Structure of the GIP

Preparatory Phase
September 1996 to
March 1997

GIP
Evaluation
May to July
1998

GIP I
April 21
to 30,1997

GIP IV
May 5 to 12, 1998

Mini
GenderAnalysis
May to August 1997

Action
Learning Project
Feb. to April 1998

Gender Internship
Programme

GIP II
August
12 to 21, 1997

GIP III
January
6 to 12, 1997

Action
Learning
Project
Sept 1997
to January 1998

Chart 6

Programme Design

Objectives	Contents
Module I :	
• Awareness and conceptual-isation of gender • Planning for mini-gender	• Gender in self • Psycho-social dimensions analysis (MGA) of gender • Social construction of gender • Gender Planning frameworks • Planning MGA
Module II:	
• Understanding gender context in organisations • Developing gender perspectives in NRM	• MGA presentations and Critiquing • Gender in Natural Management Resource • Gender in Organisations • GIP's concept of gender • Initiating ALPs
Module III :	
• Building gender perspec-stives through ALPs • Perspective development policy in organisations	• Critiquing of ALP • Analysis of policy in on organisations • Reformulating ALPs
Module IV:	
• Consolidation of Experiences and learning	• Reflections on personal and organisational experiences in gender • ALP presentations and future plans

Seeking Partners' Commitment

To enlist the commitment of partnering organisations, a workshop was held to present the goal and programme framework. Senior functionaries from partner organisations who attended the workshop initiated a process of dialogue and commitment. The workshop also surfaced a few key concerns which enabled flexible programme framework.

Key Concerns:

 * The gender interns should be enabled to build their own universe of gender which is specific to real and live situations in the field .

 * The GIP should avoid a top-down approach and address the practical, micro-universe of the field. The methodologies of the GIP should be participant-centred and experience-based.

 * The GIP should develop appropriate tools and knowledge.

 * Would the GIP be effective in institutions and organisations which are hierarchical and personality-centred? What institutional arrangements would foster sustained change?

 * The GIP should ensure that partner organisations and gender interns own the programme.

Multi-Disciplinary Approach

The GIP was embedded in a multi-disciplinary perspective. By and large, training programmes in gender are conducted by trainers who are women and specialised in women's development. The GIP shifted from this beaten path to bring together multi-disciplinary perspectives in gender. Towards this end, a core group (three women and two men) with a background in sociology, organisational development, applied behavioural science, grassroots ngo experience and sector specialisation in

NRM was brought together to ideate and plan the GIP. The core group converged as a team, arrived at a set of guidelines and a working definition of gender to design the GIP. Instead of bringing out a pre-packaged programme, the core team made a conscious decision to be flexible in their design and wherever needed evolve the programme along with the interns to address their felt needs.

The core team was conscious of the fact that they were making a gender statement that departs from the feminist stream. It may be useful at this juncture to pause and briefly reflect on a few core features of feminism. The idiom of feminism was and continues to be women's emancipation. The early feminist were humanists who appealed to the humaneness of society to treat women better. By the time, women took the next step, their concern was not so much with society as with themselves. Women began to introspect and question the place assigned to them by society and redefine their identity. Soon a section began to focus on women's rights and felt the need to assert them militantly. This led to the viewing of women and men in oppositional terms, critiquing the restrictive culture of patriarchal institutions and above all advocating the relevance of separate development for women. This was the way of many feminists. While feminism notched up several gains for women and a few enlightened women even entered into a dialogue with men, it did not generate sufficient debate on gender issues. Such a debate requires inclusion of men and addressing the issue of their emancipation. More men have to enter into dialogue. Above all there is the challenging task of educating several stakeholders in society. Essentially, feminism has remained exclusivist and by not involving men, it has failed to open men's eyes to their own gendered conditioning.

In the development sector, training programmes in gender have highlighted the conceptual underpinnings of gender and issues in women's development. There have been no effort to address the gender dimension in organisational development.

The core team was also aware that the interns were coming from a field that has given thrust to women's development/empowerment along the segmented path. This meant that they had to undertake a collaborative journey with the interns to explore ways of gaining insights into reconstructing gender towards collaboration. To make this possible, GIP was planned as a long-term and phased programme (four modules with action-learning inter-module work), integrating several action learning elements. **(See, Diagram 14: Structure of GIP.)** Concept and methodology of multi-disciplines had to be put together to enrich GIP's concept of gender. To enrol men, there was a conscious effort to bring a woman-man team of interns from each organisation. The programme banked not only on the personal experience that gender interns would bring but more importantly on the organisational experiences and contexts. This was important as GIP's concept gave signal importance to genderising the culture of organisations. All this vitalised the GIP, converging experience and expertise with concept and methodology of different disciplines. The GIP was an intense learning not only for the interns but for the core group – cohering them in more ways than they could imagine. The experimental field that GIP offered to research and experiment with the multi-disciplinary concept of gender proved to be rich with learnings.

Premises

The following premises were developed and evolved as GIP progressed through the four modules.

- Gender is personal and contextual. It is through experiential learning that gender interns will gain insights and conceptual understanding. Gender is not an intellectual exercise.

- Learning in gender has to be application-oriented. For this interns have to take up action learning projects.

- Application-oriented learning requires support from within the organisation and access to resources from outside.

- All organisations have a context in gender. This has to be examined to understand gender dynamics within organisations and locate interventions. Organisations do have power to initiate change through mandates.

- Gender interns should learn the principles of intervention to initiate change.

- Methodologies of learning should include interactive exercises, dialogues, action-learning projects, thematic discussions, spaces for self-reflection and inter-module facilitation.

Guiding Values

The following values provided the guide posts to the GIP.

- Transformations in gender is a journey

- Change from within is critical in gender

- Commitment and passion alone carries change process forward

- Gender is multi-dimensional. Gaining an understanding in gender requires a multi-disciplinary approach.

- Giving equal value to the experiences of women and men

- There are several right answers in gender

Methodologies

What vitalised the design of the GIP were its methodologies that underpinned three core elements – internalisation, conceptualisation and action learning. The mix of methodologies and techniques included a rich combination of interactive presentations, conceptual frameworks, case studies, visuals, group work, simulation exercises, role plays, self-reflecting learning events (labs and semi-structured reflective exercises), mind-body work, self-rating exercise, open-dialogues, reading

and writing assignments, journal maintenance and a few others were aimed to ensure lively sessions. **(See Chapter 5: Methodologies in Learning.)**

It is pertinent to make a brief mention of experiential learning laboratory and semi-structured reflective events that gender interns went through to relate with each of their 'gendered self'. Few gender programmes have addressed 'self' in gender. Fewer still use these reflective learning methodologies to address 'self' in gender. This was an intense experience for the interns as several of them were able to delve deep into their gendered states. A few of them could make personal shifts. The gender lab went through several experiments in self-journey, enabling interns gain insights into their experiences. More importantly, the interpersonal journey that the interns went through enabled them to understand the plural experiences of the group, bonding them into cohesive learning group. There are no shortcuts to learning and experiencing. Personal growth in gender is a process that enhances the depth and validity of reflection within oneself and communication with others. As one begins this journey, women and men will begin to explore their own meaning of life and respond to life situations in humane way.

Action Learning Project

Action-learning projects that each intern undertook were learning sites and the running thread of the GIP, providing insights into the many connections between self, organisation and policy in gender. The themes of ALPs ranged from impacting on organisational policy, addressing the internal dynamics of gender in a woman-headed organisation to small field-based studies aimed at impacting on some aspects of organisational realities, at the other.

How did the gender interns select the topics for their ALPs? What were the critical steps and processes that were followed? The selection of the topic/area of intervention was made by the interns after an initial mini-gender analysis (between the first

and second module) and sensing of the organisational realities. The interns selected action learning projects that were to last for six months, after taking into account the mandates given to them, doing an assessment of the felt-needs within the organisation and above all assessing their own capabilities and areas of influence. After every module, they shared their learnings with the organisation through workshops and informal dialogues with concerned colleagues. As and when the need arose, they drew the support of Inter-Module Facilitators (IMFs) to bring interventions (orientation, situation analysis etc.) to take the change process forward. The interns initiated interventions, brought back their struggles and learnings to be shared in different modules of GIP, learnt from each other and course-corrected to move ahead. Many of their interventions brought them in touch with emotional field of gender not only within organisations but also in their personal lives. The GIP provided spaces to reflect upon the intense emotional journey that a few of the interns went through.

Apart from creating pockets of awareness, ALPs ushered in tiny processes of organisational change within organisations. However, most of the gender interns went back with a major concern of how best to take forward the shifts within each of them and in their organisation.

Making Shifts

It is pertinent to highlight the gradual shifts that occurred as interns went through the programme. When they attended the first module, each one of them had a starting point – an individual and organisational biography on gender. The history and experience of each intern in their organisation and project reflected the different contexts of women's development. It was clear that they were all addressing women's development along the segmented path. But as interns gained insights on their gendered states and its construction in society, they began to see the relevance of looking at gender in multiple ways. This was

not easy as many of them had internalised the concept of emancipation through separate space as an essential route. Understanding the value of collaboration despite differing interests and values was a slow process. Equally difficult to perceive was the contextual relevance of separate and collaborative spaces in gender. Struggles to understand these concepts found reflection in their action learning projects.

Inter-Module Facilitation (IMF)

The multi-disciplinary core group undertook the role of IMFs. The IMF was an accompaniment mechanism which helped gender interns seek clarity, do course correction and apply their learning in their action projects. To internalise and consolidate learning, the role of IMF was a felt-need and proved to be critical. The IMFs shared the struggles of the interns in their gender journey (Action Learning Project), often extending their resources for taking the change forward.

Grappling with Issues and Concerns in Gender

The GIP was an intense learning experience not only for gender interns but the core group as well. The intensity of their learnings is entangled in empirical details and processes and cannot be easily captured in text. At best, one can place below a few of the issues and concerns that the group grappled with.

Evolving Personal Definitions of Gender

Looking at gender relations in an integrated way rather than focussing solely on women was the foremost difficulty faced by the interns. There was also a tendency to view gender from outside rather than from within. A major insight that emerged was that gender definitions are dynamic and rarely frozen. A few of the definitions evolved by the interns are noteworthy.

Gender is a socially constructed power relation between men and women that stereotypes their roles without giving equal value to their differences (biological etc.) and thereby restricts men and women from autonomously realising their full human potential in harmony.

Gender means that men and women inspite of their biological differences should be treated equally and provided with the freedom of choice to realise their full human potential which would contribute to the healthy development of society.

Addressing Resistance and Politically Correct Stances

A critical learning of the interns was on how best to negotiate resistance in gender within organisations. Each of the interns experienced overt and covert processes of resistance to the new learnings they carried on gender. Covert processes are not readily seen since they occur in informal situations, often behind the scenes. Organisations, therefore can profess to be gender sensitive, whereas in actuality covert resistance could block gender sensitive processes. There were examples of interns who were incapable of initiating change despite their position as senior functionaries. On the other hand, interns who held middle positions could effect successful gender interventions. The learning was that when interns carried 'passion and commitment', and plan interventions strategically they could impact despite their position. Initiating studies, conducting orientation to a large category of employees are a few examples.

Conflict Over Separate and Collaborate Space

The confusion on how and when to create separate and collaborative spaces in gender within their organisations and projects led to considerable struggle. There was a mistaken notion that collaborative and separate spaces cannot co-exist. Whereas in its true sense, these have their own validity. However, the methodologies of open dialogue enabled the interns to gain clarity.

Critical Mass

Creating a critical mass within organisations to take interventions forward emerged as a major issue for many interns. There was a realisation that in gender one can never 'go it alone'. There is need to enlist support of both women and men to sustain the change process. Dialogues with IMFs and personal

learnings enabled the interns evolve their own strategies to build a critical mass, in many cases successfully.

EXCERPT FROM THE FORMATIVE EVALUATION OF THE GIP

The GIP has produced a rich body of experience and database. What is important is to take the learnings forward for dissemination and further experimentation. There are several replicable elements that can be effectively adapted by practitioners to carry forward the concept of reconstructing gender towards collaboration. Disseminating this concept would show many right paths to route interventions for transformations in gender. Given below is an excerpt from the formative evaluation report.

'....The GIP was well-timed in SDC's gender agenda. It managed to place before SDC and its partners the de facto definition and understanding of 'gender' and 'gender sensitivities'. It initiated with that definition a training approach and methodology by which a new gender dialogue could take shape. GIP designed the political space beyond 'women's empowerment' and tried to shift the responsibilities of empowered men and women. It nudged women to go beyond their exploration of the self and to understand the other – a political demand women make of men! And inversely, it provoked the men to first internalise the frames by which the 'personal becomes political', before they patronisingly reach out to the cause of women's empowerment. This was where the relevance of GIP as a concept lied.'

'....The conceptual understandings of GIP would be effective, if used well, with women's groups who are well ahead in their own process of 'empowerment' thereby taking them to the next step of using and channelling women's power to understand the 'male', to help them transform their conditioned existence and to help men emancipate themselves. Similarly, with unsensitised sections of men, GIP gender sensitises by raising

issues of their emancipation without threatening them. But, when one used the GIP concept in mixed groups, with varying levels of 'empowerment' or 'emancipation', as it happened in this training, then the group does not respond as a 'gendered collective'. It was evident that the men in GIP made many more shifts in perception and attitude than women, because they were more comfortable with the concept. The women seemed more confused – and in their confusion were trying to debunk their own emancipation, rather than use it to empower the group. Thus, the GIP concept can be effective for both men and women only if the where, when and how is thought through more carefully.'

'The process adopted, raised the level of debate and seriousness attached to gender training in organisations, especially in organisations which do not have a gender priority. As quite a few of the participants admitted, gender is a buzz word in today's development world and a bandwagon which everyone wants to climb. In such circumstances, even a 'good consultant' cannot make serious dents in the organisation's perspectives, because the consultant is perceived as someone who can take the organisation closer to the bandwagon; not someone whose expertise can be used to redefine organisational perspectives. In such an environment, GIP positioned gender training in organisations differently, and took on the realm of perspective building within key individuals. Though, as mentioned repeatedly, there is scope for much improvement in the way the HRD partnership between the donor and the organisation was designed, GIP ... initiated a process by which organisations invest in redefining their gender outlook. The lacuna in the links between GIP and the organisations per se can to a large extent be circumvented, if the objectives are crystallised further. Some of the problems stemmed from the fact that GIP had too ambitious an agenda. It became increasingly unclear whether the agenda was to train trainers or train organisational representatives to become gender sensitive. Perhaps, the objective

was the former, but the level of trainees forced the GIP to focus on the latter. In any case, this dual objective not only pressurised the participants, but shifted the focus from the organisations to the individuals…The conceptual and methodological basis of GIP must be the point from which SDC's gender interventions should now evolve. It can evolve successfully if it extends the debate to the many institutions and individuals seriously engaged in humanistic and gender interventions in the country.'

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RECONSTRUCTING GENDER TOWARDS COLLABORATION

The post-independent India has witnessed far reaching changes in the lives of women. How have transformations in women's lives altered the relationship between women and men? Beyond a point, women's lives cannot alter unless men's lives alter too. In other words, there is a separate space and a shared space in gender relationships. While acknowledging the significance of separate space, one needs to see if changes are occurring in shared space as well. The universe of shared space in gender relations compels one to recognise the criticality of having to go beyond women's emancipation to nurture arenas of collaborative relationships that are conducive to develop the full potential of both.

This book explores the context in which women's development has occurred in India and argues that beyond a certain threshold, gender has to be seen in a holistic and not fragmented way. It is only a humanistic approach that can reveal the connection between subjective perceptions of reality with the objective social world. This book argues that a great deal of work in gender lies in the field of analysing and understanding inner processes within individuals, organisations and societal institutions.

Reconstructing Gender Towards Collaboration is a timely and critical reading for development practitioners, students, intellectuals and all those in the pursuit of broadening their understanding of the complex field of gender and taking the debate forward.